THE *Triumph of Sovereign Grace* OR A Brand pluckt out of the Fire:

Being the Substance of a

FUNERAL DISCOURSE,

PREACHED AT

BACOP, May 23. 1742.

At the Request, and on Occasion of the Death of

LAU. BRITLIFFE, late of CLIRISHER, near *BURNLEY*;

Who was executed at *LANCASTER*, at the LENT ASSIZES, 1742.

With a brief Rehearsal of some of the most remarkable Occurrences of his Life; and more particularly after his Apprehension; and the voluntary Surrender of himself next, at the Castle of *Lancaster*; with his following Trial, Condemnation and Execution, at the Time abovesaid.

Together with a short and faithful Account of his exemplary Repentance, and hearty Sorrow for his grievous Offences; his Jealousy over his own Heart, least he should not Sorrow after a *Godly Sort*; his close Endeavours after a true Sense of Pardon, thro' the Blood of CHRIST; with his humble and warm Applications to GOD for Mercy, with many Prayers and Tears, wherein 'tis hoped he was heard, in that he *Feared*.

First rehearsed more briefly in the close of the above-said Discourse, and now somewhat enlarged.

By DAVID CROSLY, *Minister*.

Is not this a Brand pluckt out of the Fire. Zech. iii. 2.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Candid Reader.

IT was with uncommon reluctancy that I was prevail'd with to attend upon the deceased, within this small treatise so much discoursed of, in his last moments; in order to his thorough preparation for a happy eternity; if thro' boundless Mercy it was found attainable: And with little less aversion did I bring myself, at his request, to preach the following sermon to a very numerous audience, and on so singular and critical an occasion: And now with the greatest difficulty of all, have I been brought to a compliance in making these rude composures publick, in this censorious age; not only because of my manifold insufficiences in general, but more particularly, that not having, nor using notes, I am unavoidably exposed in this case to the greater inconveniences, in having so great a dependance on memory, after so long a suspence of time; but I hope, that as he that leads into all truth did

not

not altogether leave me without his guidance in any of the paſt parts of this Service, while in agitation; ſo I truſt he will be equally aſſiſting to me in the reviſal of them, while I tranſmit them from the Ear to the Eye, more deliberately to be weighed, conſcientiouſly improved, and with a pious careſulneſs reduced to practice; in a way anſwerable to the gracious deſigns of that providence, that has ſo viſibly led me on from ſtep to ſtep, in the whole affair, ſo far as I have had any concern therein.

Upon the whole I can ſincerely ſay, that both in writing out the ſermon, and in the whole relation I have given of what occurr'd in the priſon, in my diſcourſe with him, I have been both as faithful, and impartial, as my Memory, with the help of ſeveral others, could extend to; except in ſome few things, that I have rather added than altered; not to vary from the ſcope, but better to clear the argument, and further the deſign in hand; as being very deſirous (ſo far as attainable by ſuch weak means,) that the juſt may be eſta-

bliſhed, and Iniquity for ever ſtop it's mouth.

And forasmuch as mention is made, in the following diſcourſe, of a paper which I delivered to the deceaſed, when I firſt came to him in the Priſon, which I had drawn up, on a ſuppoſition that I ſhould find him ſhut up in the low Jail, where we could have no convenience for proper converſation, and other exerciſes, neceſſary in ſuch an important caſe. Notwithſtanding I found myſelf happily miſtaken in my expectation, yet I thought proper, being it was drawn up, to deliver it to him, that he might as he had opportunity, the more ſedately conſider the arguments, and weigh the proofs, therein urged, out of holy ſcripture; which was of ſo good uſe to him, and generally ſo ſatisfactory to others, that have ſeen it, that it is judged requiſite to inſert it in this introduction; tho' I muſt needs ſay, I drew it up without any further view, than (if it might be) to awaken, and bring to repentance my diſtreſſed friend, then under the ſentence of condemnation; being exceedingly deſirous, that after all, there might be hope in his

laſt end. And when he afterwards told me that he had ſhewn it to Dr. FENTON, *I blamed him not a little, being far from deſigning or expecting, ſuch a vulgar compoſure, ſhould come under the cognizance of a Perſon of ſuch exquiſite accompliſhments. I am informed alſo that ſeveral copies are already diſperſed among my acquaintance, which induces me the rather, to allow it a place among theſe preliminaries. And the contents are as follow.*

A chriſtian

A chriſtian viſit to a condemned Priſoner, *drawn up in writing before-hand, leſt convenient Opportunity ſhould not be met with in the* Priſon.

Poor *Lau. Britliffe,*

I Can hardly ſay whether my ſorrow, or ſurprize, is the greater, to find you in this forlorn, and diſconſolate condition. A priſoner, nay a criminal, and a condemned one too; ah what pity; A freeholder's ſon, of a reputable Family, of a laudable education, and heretofore a zealous profeſſor of religion; and to the eye of the world, both commendably married, and comfortably ſettled; in the poſſeſſion of a handſome eſtate, under the care of indulgent parents, and bleſt with hopeful children: And yet now alaſs all ſacrificed; relations and friends; their converſation is abandon'd, their good offices forfeited, and render'd uſeleſs; which

which have been unhappily brought about, by indulging your own humours, and by gratifying an exorbitant and reſtleſs appetite to ſin and folly, and thro' a dangerous preference and violent purſuit of your own ways; which has for a long time paſt ruin'd your Character, and ſunk all your comforts; and at laſt brought you to a *Dungeon*, where your reputation lies bleeding, your liberty loſt; and in a week's time your forfeited life muſt be ſurrender'd into the brutiſh hands of a mercileſs *Hangman*: And then you muſt, by an unavoidable conſtraint, abandon alſo your Eſtate, and for ever bid adieu to your painted pleaſures, with all the luxurious companions of your ſin and ſhame, and leave your relations drenched in tears, and almoſt ſunk with fruitleſs expences, as well as covered over with a cloud of reproaches, and ſome of them ready to faint under agonies of grief, in the melancholy views of your ſo near approaching, ſcandalous, as well as painful, exit at the GALLOWS.

Oh! and alaſs for you! were ever ſuch careleſs, not to ſay deſperate, ſteps taken

taken? Were ever time and ſtrength worn out, and ſo much money ſpent, in ſuch a wretched manner? What pains have you taken to make your ſelf miſerable, and your friends ſorrowful, to the higheſt degree? So that money cannot purchaſe, nor intreaties procure, one month's life, or one hour's liberty, for you: And all theſe valuable enjoyments, are thus unhappily forfeited, in exchange for empty trifles, or at beſt, but for gilded pleaſures. And, which is yet much more ſhocking, if you had hereby run, no greater hazard, than that of corporal ruin, or the loſs of your natural life, the matter had been comparatively ſmall; but alaſs for you, you have both very deſparately, and very dangerouſly, hazarded your precious and immortal ſoul, in compariſon whereof the loſs of ten thouſand worlds is ſcarce worth the naming.

And that this is real matter of fact, viz. that your ſoul is in the utmoſt danger without true repentance, and faith in Chriſt Jeſus, is moſt evident from *Gal.* v. 19. 20. 21. 22. *The works of the fleſh*, ſaith the apoſtle, *are manifeſt, adulteries,*

adulteries, fornications, uncleanneſs, envyings, murthers, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like; of the which I tell you, as I have told you in times paſt, that they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. The like thunder claps you may meet with in *Eph.* v. 5. 6. and in i. of *Cor.* vi. 9. 10: And that your name is writ, in capital letters, in this black catalogue, of notorious ſinners, I had rather you were convinced of by the heart-renting teſtimony of your own awakened conſcience, than by the too loud drum of common fame, almoſt every where to be heard: O that it were half ſo manifeſt, that you had the like experience of i. *Cor.* v. 11. *Such alſo were ſome of you, but now are ye waſhed* &c. And ſure I am, you cannot plead ignorance with *St. Paul*, i. *Tim.* i. 13. who many years ago, was ſo tender of ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, unclean living, exceſſive drinking, and the like; and was obſerved to make conſcience of private prayer, with frequent hearing, and reading the word, as many yet in being can teſtify.

O what

O what pity was it that ever you ſhould leave of, and abandon ſuch good and godly beginnings, to turn again with the dog to his vomit, and with the ſow that was waſhed to her former wallowin the mire. Surely poor *Laurence* you have hereby brought up an ill report on the good land, viz. the pleaſant and for ever praiſe-worthy ways of the Lord; no wonder therefore, that you fall in the wilderneſs. Theſe conſiderations, whatever your thoughts are of them, I can aſſure you, afford your old friends very melancholy thoughts of the ſtate of your ſoul, as well as body; there being not the leaſt ground of hope left, of your future ſafety, unleſs you can yet be brought to true repentance; that ſo by Chriſt Jeſus, through faith, you may obtain the free remiſſion of all your heinous offences, while you remain on this ſide eternity; for after death, as the tree falls ſo it lies. And for this very end am I now come at the earneſt requeſt of both yourſelf, and your afflicted, ſorrowful Parents, to treat with you, and in the bowels of Chriſt, to intreat you to repent

out

out of hand: The Father of mercies, proſper my way unto you, on that account.

But what ſhall I ſay, ah unhappy *Laurence*, and unhappy again much more, if you feel no remorſe for theſe things; for if your conſcience do not ſmite you, 'tis a plain indication that 'tis becauſe it is ſeared, as with a hot iron: Awake, awake, ſurely it is high time indeed with you to awake. O that I knew what arguments to uſe, to rouſe up your languiſhing ſpirits, and to mollify your ſteelified heart; that you might repent from the heart, and your ſoul be ſaved in the day of the Lord, *though ſo as by fire*, according to i. *Cor.* iii. 15. Now therefore ſince eternity is at your door, and your precious ſoul lies at ſtake, and muſt in a very few days, either be with Chriſt in paradiſe, or in the burning lake, where the worm dies not, and the fire goes not out, let me entreat you by the tender mercies of God, not to put of repentance any longer, but out of hand to humble yourſelf, as in ſackcloth and Aſhes.

And

And truly I am glad I can ſay, and GOD knows I can only ſay, you have yet ſpace to repent. Oh! be not like the woman, *Rev.* ii. 21. Oh! let not Chriſt mourn over you as once over Jeruſalem, *Luke* xix. 41. 44. with an, *If thou hadſt known at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Alaſs my friend! ſhortly, very ſhortly, will theſe things be hid from your eyes; if you accept not, if you improve not time and mercy, while in your hand.

But methinks, I hear you ſaying, Oh! but is it not too late already! To which the anſwer is, it is no leſs than a miracle of mercy if it be not. But yet ſince there is no other way of hope in Iſrael concerning this thing, reſolve with Queen Eſther, to goe in unto the king, to intreat for mercy, and ſay with her, if I periſh, I periſh, *Eſther* iv. 16. but Queen Eſther did not periſh; neither ſhall you upon your humble application to God for mercy; while the compaſſionate Saviour of loſt ſouls fills the throne of grace, and holds forth the golden ſcep-

tre, of reconciliation and peace, to poor fainting, and almoſt deſpairing penitents; with ſuch ſoul-quickening ſayings in his mouth, as that in *John* vi. 3. 7. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me, and he that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Humbly confide then in the word of God, and truſt in him that hath ſpoken it. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but one tittle of the word of God ſhall not fall to the ground unfulfilled. Remember a thief on the croſs was converted; of which *St. Auguſtine* ſaith, one thief was converted upon the croſs, that none might deſpair; and but one, that none might preſume. Deſpair not then though the repentance be at the eleventh hour, keep your eye upon the thief; his was at the very laſt hour; therefore tho' your ſins be exceeding great, yet ſtill deſpair not. *David* was guilty both of adultery and murder, and yet when he ſaid, to *Nathan*, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord*, how ſoon was his fainting ſoul reviv'd with this divine cordial, *the Lord hath put away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not die.* ii. Sam. 12. 13.

Hope

Hope then in GOD's mercy through Chriſt. DAVID ſaith, *behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon thoſe that hope in his mercy, to deliver their ſoul from death.* Pſa. xxxiii. 18. 19. and in Pſa. cxlvii. 11. he goeth further and ſaith, *the Lord taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy.* Would you have God fix the eye of his mercy upon you, and to take pleaſure in you, then hope in his mercy. But with all, here obſerve, the fear of God, and hope in his mercy, go both together. To hope in his mercy, and not to fear him leads to preſumption; and to fear him and not to hope in his mercy, leads to deſpair; but both together, like an even ballance, keep the ſoul ſteady, ſafe, and comfortable. But perhaps you may heſitate about the pardon of your ſins; how the moſt holy God, that is juſt as well as merciful, can reconcile ſuch a ſtupendous act of his mercy, as the forgiveneſs of your enormous offences; which ſeems inconſiſtent with the rectitude and purity of his juſtice. But the anſwer in ſhort is, Chriſt Jeſus, is ap-

pointed of God as our ſurety, to appear for us in the court of juſtice, and make full ſatisfaction for our ſins. *He was made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, and ſo he redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us,* Gal. iii. 13. *Thus we are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt.* Rom. vii. 4. *For God hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* ii. Cor. v. 21. *And laid upon him the iniquities of us all.* Iſai. v. 3. 6. Hence *Peter* ſaith, *who his own ſelf bore our ſins in his own body on the tree, by whoſe ſtripes we are healed.* i. Pet. ii. 24. *Thus he hath put an end to ſin and finiſhed tranſgreſſion, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs.* Dan. ii. 24. Hence *Jeremiah* ſaith, *the iniquity of Iſrael ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, they ſhall not be found; for I will pardon them ſaith the Lord.* Jer. l. 20. This is our Goſpel way of ſalvation, thro' faith in Chriſt crucified; neither is there ſalva-

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tion in any other; *for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved*, ſaith the apoſtle to the Jewiſh Sanhedrim. *Acts* iv. 12. *To him therefore ſhall the gathering of the People be; in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt, and his reſt ſhall be glorious.* Iſai. xi. 10.

Let me beg of you therefore to give that good God, whom you have ſo greatly offended, a meeting in his dear Son, *the only mediator between God and man.* i. Tim. ii. 5. *In whom he is ready to be reconciled to you, and not impute your treſpaſſes unto you.* ii. Cor. v. 19. *and if* you ſay your ſins are many, very many. *John* the divine tells you, *the blood of Chriſt cleanſes us from all ſin.* Note the emphaſis of the phraſe, *from all ſin*; or if the deepneſs of their dye affright you, hear what *Iſaiah* ſaith, chapter i. 18. *though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow, tho' they be red as crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* And ſay not, the hardneſs of the terms that God inſiſts on diſcourages you. Hear what *Jeremiah* ſaith from the Lord, *Jer.* iii. 13. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity*; Oh

how gracious is this word ONLY. And in *Jo.* ii. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, that is, with an humble, upright heart*; and what can God inſiſt on leſs. *If we confeſs our ſins*; well what then? *he is faithful, and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* What wondrous words are theſe, *faithful and juſt to forgive us.* Let us query here, how comes Gods juſtice, and faithfulneſs to be concerned, nay engaged in the forgiveneſs of our ſins? The anſwer is, 'tis by vertue of his covenant and promiſe, ratified by the blood of his ſon.

Conſider now, is it not in your heart, thus to acknowledge your iniquities, and confeſs your ſins; ſince God has bound himſelf, in juſtice, and faithfulneſs, to forgive you; I ſay is it not in your heart; for our Lord tells us, from *Iſai.* xxix. 13. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*; whereupon it follows, *in vain do they worſhip me*; Mat. xv. 8. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made*

is made unto ſalvation, Rom. x. 10. *A broken and contrite heart, God will not deſpiſe.* Pſa. li. 17. Repent then from the heart, of all your ſins. 'Tis what God requires from you; *and if to-day you will hear his voice and not harden your heart*, aſſure yourſelf God, even to-day, will hear your voice; and do more for you than you can aſk or think.

And let me further add, that as in the days of your vanity, you have made the hearts of your relations, and particularly your pious, and indulgent mother, ſad; together with many other of your ſober friends, that had heretofore conceived great hopes of you, and made them often to go mourning, when they have ſeen, or heard of your manifold extravagancies; and eſpecially now to ſee and hear, what theſe things have brought you to at laſt; yet methinks I ſee how their very countenances would change, how it would exhilerate their ſpirits, and rejoice their very hearts, to hear of your exemplary repentance, though even now at the laſt; and that you fly for refuge to that hope which the goſpel ſets

before

before us all, as the only anchor of our ſouls, which is both ſure and ſtedfaſt; taking ſanctuary in the boſom, and under the healing wings, of your once dying, but now for ever living, and reigning Saviour: Yea and let me add, that there is joy in heaven over a ſinner that truly repents, and eſpecially over a *Mary Magdalen*, a great ſinner. Would you then pleaſe God the father, honour God the Son, and leave off to grieve, and vex the holy Spirit, then repent from the heart, out of hand, and turn to the Lord. He loves not, and your caſe admits not, of any delay.

Again; would you cauſe joy in heaven, and tranſport among the Angels, thoſe favourite miniſters to the heirs of ſalvation, then repent from the heart, and turn to the Lord. Finally would you refreſh the ſpirits of your old religious acquaintance, would you rejoice the minds of Chriſt's miniſters who attend you, and ſet a good example to all that are about you, or ſhall hear theſe glad tidings of you, then repent in ſincerity, and turn with a true heart, and faith unfeigned

feigned unto the Lord; and *he will have mercy on you, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Iſai.lv. 7. Or as ſome read it, *he will multiply to pardon.*

And now after all theſe motives, and arguments drawn out of the holy ſcriptures, thoſe inexhauſtible fountains of grace, and truth, the rule of our duty here, and of our doom hereafter; permit me to add for a cloſe, that ſince you have already found, that though hand join in hand, ſin ſhall not go unpuniſhed; and that whatſoever other courſe we take, our iniquities will find us out; and as the Lord expreſly tells us, in *Eze.* xviii. 30. That if *we repent not iniquity ſhall be our ruin*; even as our Lord alſo ſaith, *except we repent, we muſt all likewiſe periſh*, Luke xiii. 3. 5. Let nothing then diſsuade you from, nor diſcourage you in this indiſpenſible duty. The weightineſs of the work, and ſhortneſs of your time, allows of no delay, or heſitation: And the moſt merciful God grant unto you, to be ſtrengthened with might, by his ſpirit, in the inward man; that you may

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ſo repent, and ſo believe, as that having your puniſhment only in this life, you may thro' the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, eſcape the wrath to come, and obtain that incorruptible inheritance that ſhall never be taken from you.

This is what I call the preliminary paper; the ſame for ſubſtance, and very much the ſame in expreſſion, with what I delivered to him, when I firſt came to him in the priſon. And of what uſe it was to him, and how much it both facilitated, and forwarded, the deſign I went upon, appeared in the whole of our converſation afterward.

And now that this relation of theſe affairs, may be in like manner uſeful to the reader, I will briefly add the following ſerious reflections.

I. *Let all perſons into whoſe hands this may fall, conſcientiouſly conſider the abſolute neceſſity of a timely repentance. Oh! how did the deceaſed lament his being ſo dilatory on one hand, and ſo trifling and indifferent, on another, in the great concern of ſincere repentance! Sometimes,*

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when under some sharper pangs of conviction, from some sharper lashes of the law upon his conscience, he was ready to contend with Horses; but by and by grew so remiss, when conviction wore off, that he could hardly run with footmen; and in a little while by giving way to carnal diversions, he quite lost all present sense of real remorse, and fell into gross stupidity; perhaps for months, if not years; till at last the fatal hour of death overtook him; and then alass he found, with horror enough, how he had misspent his time, neglected his duty, and hazarded his immortal soul; as himself told me with regret enough; earnestly wishing that all people might take warning by him, and advice from him, to improve their time, observe their duty, and tender the welfare of their never dying souls, at another rate than he had done. And might my most moving intreaties add any further weight in this important case, I would say to one and all, Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus, *Acts* ii. 38. *which is as much as to say* repent, and put on the Lord Jesus, and make not any more provision

for

for the fleſh, to fulfill the luſts thereof. *Rom.* xiii. 13. 14. *This text was the means in the hand of God, of St.* Auguſtine's *converſion; would to God any thing I could ſay, or direct to, might be of like uſe to the reader.*

II. *When the Jailor came to* PAUL *and* SYLAS *ſaying, ſirs,* what muſt I do to be ſaved; *the bleſſed anſwer was,* believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, the whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick; *are you ſick of ſin in the way of repentance? then go to Jeſus Chriſt, as your phyſician, in the way of faith.* I wound and I heal *ſaith the almighty,* Deut. xxxii. 29. *If he hath wounded you with the ſword of juſtice under the law, he will heal you with the balſam of his ſon's blood under the goſpel; he will forgive all your iniquities, in juſtifying you; and heal all your diſeaſes, by ſanctifying you.* Pſa. ciii. 3. *See with what bowels he receives and comforts repenting* Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. 20. *And returning* Iſrael, Hoſea xiv. 4. 5. *&c. Can any thing be more cordial than the words of* Elihu, *in* Job. xxxiii. 27. 28.

O turn then to this ſtrong-hold ye priſoners of hope. Zech. ix. 12. *If you be true penitents you are priſoners of hope*; *for* a broken and a contrite heart, God will not deſpiſe. Pſalm li. 17. Iſaiah lvii. 15. *Whatever you do tread not under foot the Son of God. It puts him to an open ſhame.* Heb. ix. 29. *Rather take* David's *advice*, kiſs the Son &c. Pſalm ii. 12. *For* if any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is to be anathema maranatha. i. *Cor.* xvi. 22. *For if there be no other name given under heaven, whereby any man can be ſaved but the name of* Jeſus, *then ſurely we ought to love him, and believe on him, but the firſt propoſition is true*, Acts iv. 12. *Therefore ſo is the ſecond.*

III. Ye that love the Lord hate evil. *Pſalm* 97. 10. Whoſoever names the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt let him depart from iniquity. ii. *Tim.* 2. 19. *It made the apoſtle weep to ſee how many* by their walking declared themſelves enemies to the croſs of Chriſt. *Phil.* iii. 18. 19. who in words do profeſs him, but in works deny him. *Theſe are ungodly men*, that

turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs. But thou man of God flee theſe things, and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, and meekneſs: i. *Tim.* vi. 11. for the grace of God that brings ſalvation has appeared, i. e. by the goſpel, to all men teaching us, i. e. us that believe, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world. *i. e. ſoberly towards ourſelves, righteouſly towards our neighbours, and godlily towards God.*

In ſhort, faith without works is dead; and yet at the ſame time except we be and abide in Chriſt by faith, we can do nothing, *John* xv. 4. 5. *Chriſt is the vine, we are the branches; unleſs we have vital union with the vine, we can bring forth no fruit. The order then lies thus; firſt to be taken out of the wild olive tree; off the fallen nature, where we are dead in ſin, under the curſe and wrath of God; and grafted into Chriſt the true vine, in whom we are made alive, and able to do all things, God ſhall call us to, thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening us. Our goodneſs then is not*

of

of us, but of the grace of God in Chriſt; all our ſprings then are in him, and from him our fruit is found; to us belongs ſhame; to him belongs the glory; and upon himſelf let the Crown flouriſh for evermore. But moſt evident it is, if we be really in him, we ſhall be fruitful; he is a ſweet fountain and cannot yield bitter water; beſides if he ſave us, it is but reaſonable that we ſerve him. If the bleſſed Jeſus deliver us from all our enemies, ſurely we ſhould ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life. *Luke* i. 73. 74. *If he make us free from ſin, we ſhould* become ſervants to God, and have our fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. *Rom.* vi. 22. 23. For we are not our own; he has bought us with a price, even that of his own blood; therefore we ſhould glorify him with our body and with our ſpirits, which are his. i. *Cor.* vi. 20.

Finally, to repent of our ſins, to believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and live in the fear and to the glory of God, in Chriſt, thro' the renewing grace of the holy ſpirit, is the buſineſs of our lives. Nor is it

poſſible we ſhould be happy in the life to come without a due attendance hereunto; and the more effectually to allure all people to a chearfull compliance herewith, I have thus given you a threefold chain of motives and incouragements out of the holy ſcriptures, and almoſt word for word in ſcripture phraſe; and that they may not miſs of obtaining a conſcientious regard from all that are religiouſly diſpoſed, I will cloſe this ſolemn addreſs with the apoſtles remarkable words to the Athenians, *Acts* xvii. 30. Former ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent. *The times of idolatry among the Heathens, before the revelation of the goſpel of Chriſt, is what the apoſtle meaneth by the times of former ignorance; and by God's winking at theſe times, ſhews his non-reſentment of 'em. He took cognizance of them, but did not execute the deſerved judgment upon the offenders. God does not always execute his judgments ſpeedily, as Solomon obſerves; yet as the proverb ſaith, forbearance is not forgiveneſs; and if our hearts be more fully ſet or bent to do evil, becauſe of God's long-ſuffering*

ring towards us, as in Eccle. viii. 12. *it is a very ungratefull requital to ſo merciful a God, for ſo undeſerved a favour.*

However, as it muſt be granted that God has winked at, or in a way of long-ſuffering did paſs by even an ocean of ſins, in Iſrael, *before the coming of Chriſt, and particularly on the head of their idolatry, ſo much more muſt it be acknowledged that God has winked at, or paſſed by the iniquities of the preſent times, at a much greater rate; at leaſt ſo far, not to puniſh us, or take vengeance on us, as our ſo much aggravated offences have moſt notoriouſly deſerved. Was ever ſwearing, diſſimulation, drunkenneſs, and whoredom, ſelf-ſeeking, undermining one another, oppreſſion, and doing wrong to thoſe that cannot help themſelves, carried on with a higher hand, with almoſt innumerable other vices? While God, at the ſame time, even heaps upon us his manifold bleſſings; ſuch as peace, liberty and plenty, even to a wonder, among many other valuable mercies. And yet how poor are our returns in a way of religious thankfullneſs and filial obedience, while God ſtill abounds in patience and*

long-ſuffering, almoſt beyond a parallel towards us, both in temporals and ſpirituals; out of all which I would have theſe two things diligently obſerved.

1 ſt. That God now under the goſpel, and eſpecially now in our days, commands all men every where to repent.

2 dly. He gives us ſpace to repent; yea he even waits on us to be gracious to us. But if his commands be neglected, and his long-ſuffering and patience abuſed, and the means of his grace miſimproved, which to, and among us are ſo ſuper-abundant, how ſhall we anſwer it to the awful God another day, when he comes to make inquiſition about what returns we have made, and what fruit we have brought forth? How ſhall we dare to look him in the face if when he comes to us, ſeeking grapes, he finds nothing among us, but wild grapes? How ſhall our hands be ſtrong, and our hearts endure, if inſtead of living religiouſly we be found to have lived profanely? If inſtead of reading the holy ſcripture, and hearing the word, we be found to read Romances and idle ſtories, and to have lent our ears to vain ſongs, plays, and interludes;

terludes; if inſtead of prayers and edifying diſcourſes, we have given up ourſelves to ſwearing, curſing, and obſcene talking; if inſtead of ſanctifying the Lord's day, by attending religious worſhip, and waiting on God in his holy ordinances, we be found to have attended ale-houſes, playing at cards, or foot-ball; if inſtead of loving and ſerving our neighbours, we be found to have been envious, miſchievous, and evil minded; if inſtead of being compaſſionate and charitable to the poor, we be found to have been oppreſſive, unmerciful and without hoſpitality. Above all, if inſtead of truly repenting for our ſins, we have been hard-hearted, impenitent, neither fearing God nor regarding man; and inſtead of adhering to, and relying upon Jeſus Chriſt by faith, and in true humility, and ſelf-denial, ſurrendring our all into his hands, we have been found ſelf-confident, preſumptuous, phariſaical and hypocritical, Oh! how great will our diſappointment be, if we thus go into eternity with a lye in our right hand.

Let it therefore be diligently noted, that now under the goſpel, and particularly

now

now in these our days, providence in an especial manner calls aloud upon us, to repent; by his word he commands all men every where so to do. No person is too great, nor no place too remote, but his word reaches them. Mark 13. 17. *and lays the command of God upon them to repent and turn unto the Lord. And certainly providence also never gave louder alarms, nor more multiplied calls to repentance and reformation, than at this day. Surely the Lord is coming out of his place to punish the Inhabitants of the earth. Who sees not how the Lord is arisen, and already at work, threshing the nations with the rod of his anger, and as it is in the 7th.* Psalm, 12. If the wicked turn not he will wet his Sword. *And then it will be seen what a stupendous difference is betwixt his rod of correction, and his sword of destruction. Let us turn then while it is called to day. Blessed be God he gives us space. Oh! that it may not be with us as with the woman,* Jezebell, Rev. ii. 21. I gave her space to repent and she repented not. *I earnestly beg, and in the bowels of Christ, I intreat every reader to repent in time. The awfull God commands it, and promises eternal life as a motive to it, and threatens*

threatens eternal damnation to the neglecters of it. Nothing therefore can lie with greater weight upon us, nor be a thousandth part of the concern to us. The Lord open our eyes and incline our hearts to a serious, and sincere regard to these things; or the disappointment will be dreadfull at the hour of death and day of Judgment.

The SERMON

The SERMON *preached, as was ſuppoſed, to above* 4000 *hearers.*

IF it pleaſe this numerous aſſembly, before I enter upon the ſolemn ſervice now before us, I have one earneſt requeſt to propoſe. You ſee how very large the congregation is, that is gathered together, upon this important, as well as uncommon occaſion; and cannot but obſerve the incommodious ſituation we mutually ſtand in, I in ſpeaking, and you in hearing. My requeſt to you therefore is, to be as ſilent, and ſtill, in your ſeveral places as you poſſibly can; and on my part I will endeavour to be as audible and intelligible to you all, as my abilities will reach to; and alſo contract what I have to offer into as narrow a compaſs, as the nature and weight of the occaſion and argument will admit of.

In

In the first place then, I need not tell you that I am to present you with a funeral discourse; a service I have often been call'd to, during the late mortality hereabouts; having made no less than five funeral discourses in less than so many weeks, on occasion of the death of so many of my worthy friends, whom it has pleased God to call out of their houses of clay to their shining mansions in the fathers house; the loss of whose christian society and good offices, tho' we cannot but bewail, yet at the same time we rejoyce in their happy deliverance, out of this vale of tears, and from all the sorrows and manifold incumbrances, and disturbances, incident to this state here below; henceforth to enter into peace, and to rest in their beds, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary take up their future sweet repose, in the bosom of the heavenly *Abraham*, for ever.

But what I am now to set before you, is of a more afflictive and melancholy nature. Here's death not natural, but violent; not by any mortal distemper,

or un-

or uncomfortable accident, but by the hand of juſtice. In ſhort we are now called to commemorate the ſorrowful exit of one that died as a criminal; tryed in open court, before judge and jury, and condemned upon evidence, whether true or falſe is none of our buſineſs now to inquire; and according to the ſentence then and there paſſed upon him, he was executed, and his body carefully and decently buried; as ſuch a caſe would admit of, by the kind and good offices, of ſome officious, and tender hearted friends; who greatly commiſerated his caſe, as having known him in his firſt, and moſt hopeful days; and his much expoſed, and long endangered ſoul, took its ſpeedy flight, perhaps not without friendly attendants, alſo to the awful bar of the great judge, and ſovereign of the univerſe; in order to its receiving its final and eternal doom; where corrupt and falſe evidences, and partial or mercenary proceedings, have no place; nor yet, on the other hand, is there any connivance at, or paſſing by, whatſoever men are found juſtly chargeable with in the court

of

of juſtice; or from which they are not fully and graciouſly acquitted, by and through that only mediator, betwixt God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus, and by vertue of a new covenant intereſt in, and relation to him, according to the everlaſting goſpel.

And to ſhew that notwithſtanding the manifold diſcouragements and mournful views wherewith this melancholy caſe is attended, there is one of a contrary nature, that gives us good hope thro' grace, that it goes well with the ſoul of him whoſe death we now commemorate; which in ſhort is, that he died a ſincere penitent, which notion has not been by us very readily entertained, nor taken up on ſlight grounds, for the byaſs almoſt of every ones ſentiments at firſt lay againſt, rather prejudic'd againſt, than any ways primarily inclin'd to any charitable opinion concerning him. But when things appear, by flagrant proofs, and ſeemingly inconteſtible evidences, no one ſhould wilfully ſhut their eyes. And that it was thus in the preſent caſe, that is to ſay, that *Lawrence Britliffe*, died a

ſincere penitent, and truly repented, before he left the world, of all his offences, by him unhappily, and ungodlily committed, againſt God or man; and accordingly, that he obtained of God the moſt merciful, a free forgiveneſs of all theſe his heinous offences, through the alone meritsand mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, and by faith in his name, I hope will appear, in ſome good degree, when you have heard and coolly conſidered this diſcourſe, and therewithall have duly weighed ſome other teſtimonials and coroborating occurrences, which in a little while may be made apparent.

And I muſt add, that if I had not had, theſe comfortable ideas of his dying ſtate, I ſhou'd not have appear'd or have opened my mouth this day on his account; but, at the ſame time I confeſs, had his repentance been of a more early date, it had been leſs liable to the exceptions of ſome, and leſs ſhocking to the moſt charitable; but it is to be conſidered the wind blows when as well as where it liſteth. Some are called at the eleventh hour, and ſome at the laſt minute of

that hour, as the thief upon the croſs. Let me only add in this preliminary way, that as the deceaſed deſired me to favour his memory with this diſcourſe, and therein to warn all people to ſhun the dangerous ſteps which he had ſo careleſly taken, and by the moſt moving arguments to perſuade them to a timely repentance, that turning to God, thro' Chriſt, by faith, they might have their fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life; ſo at the ſame time he gave the text which I am now to inſiſt upon. Which is

Pſa. xcix. 8. *Thou anſweredſt them O Lord our God; Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions.*

In theſe words we have a three-fold narration of what God had done for his people Iſrael; in which he magnified both his mercy and his juſtice towards them; his mercy in anſwering their prayers, and forgiving their ſins; his juſtice in taking vengeance of their inventions. In anſwering their prayers and forgiving their iniquities, he performed two ſtupendous acts of grace and ſove-

reign benevolence; and in taking vengeance of their inventions the rectitude and purity of his nature, is ſet forth by magnifying the attribute of his juſtice; that all his people may hereby learn to fear him on one hand, as well as comfortably to put their truſt in him on another.

Thou anſweredſt them O Lord our God. In theſe words ſomething is expreſt, and ſomething imply'd. Three things are expreſt. 1. They were anſwered. 2. They were anſwered by the Lord. 3. They were anſwered by the Lord their God. i. e. their covenant God; *they were anſwered*; which teacheth us that *he never ſaith to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye my face in vain: He will anſwer, yea and avenge his own elect, which cry to him day and night, though he bear with them, or bear off from them long.* Luke xviii. 7. 8. Again they were anſwered by the Lord. This makes the anſwer 1ſt. awfull. God's anſwers are awfull anſwers. 2d. It makes the anſwer certain. Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee. i. e. will anſwer thee, and that alſo in mercy.

But

But the ſweet of it is, when we are not only anſwered by the Lord, but when the Lord that anſwers us, is alſo our God; our covenant God. Thou anſweredſt them O Lord our God; this is what is expreſt.

But there is alſo ſomething implyed; and that is, that they prayed. If we do not aſk, how ſhall he be ſaid to anſwer. It is true God ſaith in *Iſaiah* lxv. 24. *before they call I will anſwer.* But his anſwer always implies, or ſuppoſes, our calling upon him ſooner or later; nay more, the call and anſwer oft go together; for ſo it follows in the ſame place; *while they are yet ſpeaking I will hear.* 'Tis true in *Prov.* i. 28. We are told; *then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer*; but that is after he has called on them during the day of his grace, and they wou'd not hear him. Then inſtead of anſwering us in a way of mercy, he will laugh at our calamities in a way of Judgment; upon the whole it appears, that fervent prayer was made on their part, and the Lord their God anſwered them on his part; but it appears from the

context, that regard is chiefly had to prayers that were made for them; ſo verſe the 6th. before our text. *Moſes* and *Aaron* among his prieſts, and *Samuel*, among them that call upon his name, they called upon the Lord and he anſwered them. As to *Moſes* and *Aaron* references are manifeſtly made to them. In *Numb.* i. 14. 19. 20. Where *Moſes* prays and pleads with God for Iſrael, on account of the ill report brought up by the ſpies concerning the promiſed land. *Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatneſs of thy mercy; and as thou haſt forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now.* Thus Moſes; and the Lord ſaid *I have pardoned according to thy word*; and in the 11th, of *Numb.* when the people murmured, *the Lord heard it; and it diſpleaſed the Lord; and the fire of the Lord burnt among 'em and conſumed them; and the people cryed unto Moſes, and when Moſes prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched, ver.* i. and ii. And in *Exod.* 32, in the caſe of the golden calf, how warmly does *Moſes* plead, and with uncommon

mon ardency expoſtulate with God, for Iſrael, in the 11. 12. 13. verſes, and in the 14. verſe it is ſaid, *and the Lord repented him of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.* Alſo in *Numb.* 16. In the caſe of *Korah*, how did *Moſes* and *Aaron* even ſtruggle with God for mercy, on the behalf of the people: And the body of the people was pardoned and ſaved, only *Korah* and his company dreadfully deſtroyed. And in the cloſe of the chapter, when the people very unworthily upbraided *Moſes* and *Aaron*, with having killed the people of the Lord, and the plague broke out among the people, *Aaron*, at *Moſes*'s command, ran into the congregation to make atonement for the people, and *he ſtood between the dead and the living, and the plague was ſtayed*, ver. 47. 48.

And how the Lord anſwered *Samuel*, in like manner when he interceded for the people, ſee the xxii. chapter of the i. of *Samuel.* From the whole let it be obſerved, that it has been the practice of the people of of God in all ages, and on all occaſions, to pray to the Lord their

God

God for peace and pardon; as alſo in like manner to pray one for another; and eſpecially ſuch as are officers, and leaders of the people. *Ja.* v. 13. 14. We ſee examples of this nature are numerous, and incouragements great hereunto; thus God honoured *Job*, in praying for his three friends, with a promiſe of their acceptance for his ſake. *Job* xli. 8. 9. And in the caſe before us, I can aſſure you, very earneſt prayers were put up to the father of mercies, in the name of our dear Lord Jeſus, both by, and for the pardon and ſalvation of the deceaſed's immortal ſoul; which I hope thro' the prevailing intereſt and mediation of the Angel at the golden altar were heard in much mercy, and anſwered accordingly. *Rev.* viii. 3. 4. to the abundant ſatisfaction of ſeveral preſent, as well as thoſe concerned therein: And this brings me to the ſecond head; he forgave their iniquities: A glorious act of tremendous mercy, in which note, 1. the agent, 2. the act, 3. the ſubject.

I. The agent acting; viz the great, the holy, the gracious, and moſt merciful;

ful God of ſalvation; whoſe admirable condeſcenſion is ſuch, that he waits on us to be gracious to us, and always takes a ſingular complacency in ſhewing mercy even to the rebellious. *That the Lord God may dwell among them.* And what a dignity does this put upon this invaluable article of our chriſtian faith, i. e. the forgiveneſs of ſins, the glorious agent acting. *That through this man is preached unto you, the forgiveneſs of ſin; and that, by him all that do believe are juſtified from all things. Note*: Hence it is, the man that repenteth is he that is pardoned, as in *Luke* xiii. 3. 5. And that believeth as here, and in *Mark* xvi. 16. *John* iii. 36. Forgiveneſs of ſins, is the gift of God to Man; but as he gives us pardon of his own good pleaſure, ſo he gives it according to his good pleaſure, and in his own eſtabliſhed way; which is in ſhort, to all adult perſons, in the way of repentance, and faith in Chriſt Jeſus. *For the whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.* Not the righteous but ſinners are called to repentance, and ſo to faith in Chriſt, and ſalvation by him: but

but he that is wilfully impenitent, and unbelieving, ſhuts up the kindom of heaven againſt himſelf, and that man's deſtruction is of himſelf; lo! this day is forgiveneſs of ſins and eternal life in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt, preach'd to you all; and he that repenteth and believeth by Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be ſaved. But if you repent not, and believe not, you muſt die in your ſins. The glimmering hopes we have of the pardon and ſalvation of him, whoſe death we now commemorate intirely depends upon this, that we hope he died a true penitent, and was helped by grace to fly to, and depend on Chriſt alone for ſalvation, with a truly humble and ſincere heart, according to the goſpel; and in this reſpect your caſe and mine is the ſame; 500 and 50 pence. Sinners muſt all be ſaved the ſame way. *Paul*, a Phariſee, and *Matthew* a Publican, came in both at one door. *Repent therefore and turn to the Lord from all your evil ways, ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin.* Eze. xviii. 30.

And now I come to the third and laſt head, *though thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions.* Here let us note.

1. The vengeance-taker. 2. The vengeance taken. 3. What he takes vengeance upon.

I. The vengeance-taker, viz. God himſelf; thou tookeſt vengeance; but to what end; not to ſatisfie his vindictive juſtice but to correct their vices; not to ſatisfie for their offences, but to mortify their luſts; and to reform their hearts and lives. Satisfaction to vindictive juſtice ariſes from another quarter. *Zech.* xiii. 7. *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts I will ſmite the ſhepherd.* The ſmiter is God the Father, the perſon ſmitten is the Son. The good Shepherd lays down his life for his ſheep; and nothing is more apparent than that the Father's ſmiting the Son is an act of juſtice. *For it became him, for, and by whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſuffering.* Heb. ii. 10. Accordingly *Iſaiah* ſaith, *it pleaſed*

the

the Lord to bruiſe him, he put him to grief, when his ſoul was made an offering for ſin, and then it was that the pleaſure of the Lord did proſper in his hands. Iſaiah liii. 10. And hereupon it is, that the Father puts upon his Son that high encomium. *Mat.* xvii. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* From hence we learn that Chriſt alone can give ſatisfaction to vindictive Juſtice. He takes vengeance then of our inventions on another foot, and to other purpoſes, than to ſatisfy his juſtice; we ought not to juſtle Chriſt from his croſs, any more than out of his throne; we ſhould be as tender of Chriſt's honour as he is of our ſalvation.

II. The vengeance taken. Which is, 1. Corrective, not deſtructive. 2. Corporal, not ſpiritual. i. e. inflicted upon the body, not upon the ſoul. 3 Temporal not eternal.

I. 'Tis corrective, not deſtructive; a rod, not a Sword; to amend us, not ruin us; to mortify our luſts, purify our affections, rectify our lives, and quicken our graces, both for the good of ourſelves and

and caution of others. And this God does ſometimes by ſickneſs, as in *Hezekiah*; ſometimes by plague and peſtilence, as in *David* when he had numbered the people; ſometimes by captivity and the ſeverities of mercileſs enemies; as in *Manaſſes*, when he was taken among the thorns, put in fetters, and carried to *Babylon*. ii. *Chron.* 33. 11. Thus he took vengeance on the *Iſraelites*, although he forgave their iniquities, in the caſe of the golden calf, and in the caſe of the ſpies; thus he puniſhed them for their idolatries, preſumptuous enterprizes, and ſinful murmurings. And may not the like be ſaid of the manifold chaſtiſements which God lays upon his people; *he not having one ſon whom he chaſtiſeth not.* *Heb.* xii. 6. 7. 8. Is not all this to ſet forth the purity of his nature, to vindicate the honour of his holineſs, as alſo to ſhew his juſt indignation againſt ſin, and the ardency and immenſity of his love to the ſouls of men.

II. The vengeance taken is on the body, not the ſoul; further than the relation and mutual ſympathy that is be-

twixt them neceſſarily obliges to. The real ſafety and welfare of the ſoul is effectually ſecured, notwithſtanding the vengeance taken for our inventions on the body. Conſider the ſoul abſtractedly from the body here, or as ſeparated from the body hereafter, and it abides intirely ſecure; and ſo ſhall the body alſo, after the laſt reſurrection, in a ſtate of immortalization.

III. The vengeance taken is temporal, not eternal; for a time, not for ever. Death and judgment break the bands, and take off the yoak from the necks of all the godly, and puts a period to all their ſorrows and ſufferings for evermore. But far otherwiſe is the caſe of the wicked and unbelieving. Their bands are made ſtrong, and their burthens intollerable to eternity. Both their ſouls and bodies are ſwallowed up in the burning as well as bottomleſs lake of fiery torments for ever.

Let it not then be thought too ſevere, that providence aſſigns us with *Lazarus* our evil things here. The diſciples of Chriſt generally go to the crown with the

the croſs upon their backs. And grieve not at it, as if thy lot was over hard. For as one obſerves, it is better to be preſerved in vinegar, than to rot in ſugar. The gall of adverſity oft yields a more thriving ſoul than the honey of proſperity. For as ſaith another, where adverſity kills its thouſands, proſperity kills it ten thouſands.

Finally: 'Tis better that God anſwers us out of the ſecret places of thunder, and by terrible things in righteouſneſs, as *David* ſpeaks, than to be quite carried away by the overflowing torrent of more pleaſing temptation, by not being anſwered at all; which was the ſorrowful caſe of king *Saul*, i. *Sam.* 28. 15. 'Tis better that God take vengeance of our inventions, and at the ſame time forgive us our ſins, than with *Ephraim* to be let alone when joyn'd to idols. *Hoſea* iv. 17. 'Tis better to be choſen of God in the furnace of affliction, *Iſaiah* xlviii. 10. than with *Uzziah* in the very zenith of proſperity, to have our hearts lifted up to our deſtruction. ii. *Chron.* 26. 16.

The third and laſt thing is; what God takes vengeance upon; as to thoſe perſons whoſe ſins he forgives, and whoſe prayers he anſwers. Our text anſwers thou tookeſt vengeance of their inventions.

God takes vengeance not of his peoples perſons, but of their inventions; not of their perſons, to the endangering of their ſouls, but of their inventions to the amendment and bettering of their lives, and by conſequence to the benefit of their ſouls. The ſcripture ſaith God made man upright, but he found out many inventions: And theſe are the inventions that God takes vengeance of; inventions that defile us, and diſhonour God; that deſtroy God's image in us, and enervate his authority over us; the tendency whereof is to make void his relation to us, and annul his intereſt in us; inventions to ſet up other Gods beſides the true God, at leaſt in our hearts; or to invent and ſet up other ways of worſhip than he has appointed; and like the *Jews* to make void the commandments of God by our traditions. Nay more;

inventions

inventions that corrupt our morals, and vitiate our affections; that overthrow the authority of the holy ſcriptures and ſap the very foundations of the chriſtian faith.

How can it be, but the moſt ſovereign and righteous God, ſhould take vengeance on thoſe and ſuch like inventions? And if any of God's own people, indulge themſelves to ſuch a degree of boldneſs, as to abandon themſelves to any ſuch ſinful latitude; ſure they cannot expect to do it with impunity, while the great and holy ONE, that inhabits eternity, rules the world, by the almighty arm of his power; and has all things bare and naked before his all ſeeing eye; who charges his angels with folly, and the very heavens are not pure in his ſight. Oh! how tremendous is the grace, that there is forgiveneſs of ſins with ſuch a God, that we who are comparatively worms and no men, may yet fear and ſerve him with acceptance, through a mediator, bleſſed be God for it, Jeſus Chriſt.

Let none then under a notion of being God's people expect to follow their own

inventions; i. e. their own ſinful inventions, and be connived at, or indulged by him, whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire; while that remarkable text ſtands upon record in our bibles. *Amos.* iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore will I puniſh you for your iniquities.* God can be reconciled to the ſinner and yet take vengeance of the ſin. He can reconcile himſelf to our perſons through his ſon, and yet proclaim open war againſt our iniquities; to be let alone with *Ephraim* when joyn'd to idols. *Hoſea* iv. 17. and given up to our own hearts luſts, as in *Rom.* i. 24. 25. is the high road to deſtruction.

And this brings me to the application and therein I ſhall, 1ſt. Accommodate the argument to the occaſion of it; and 2dly. cloſe with ſome ſuitable inferences from the whole.

I. Concerning him whoſe untimely death has occaſioned this diſcourſe. I will begin with a ſhort account of his life, and ſo go on tho' very briefly to his impriſonment, condemnation and death. As to his life in general I pretend not to

ſo much

ſo much knowledge of it, as to give any particular account thereof; neither have I any inclination to make mention of ought, but what may be ſome way or other inſtructive and beneficial to thoſe that hear it. And firſt of all 'tis well known, that at his firſt ſetting forth he was a hopeful young man; beyond many; and promiſed great things, as to his being of ſome conſiderable eminence in religion; for zeal and a proficiency in knowledge and the practice of ſeveral chriſtian duties, he exceeded many of his companions; a diligent hearer of the word; in reading frequent; and fervent in promoting chriſtian converſe, and in carrying on private meetings for prayer and for improvement of gifts; wherein his abilities are ſaid not to have been deſpiſcable. But not taking due care, (which I fear is the fault of many,) to marry one in humour, and education, like himſelf, it proved, as many think, much to his diſadvantage in religious matters; he being of a temper not ſo able as ſome to bear contradiction, and ridicule, eſpecially from ſo near a relation; which as is

reported

reported by ſome not unworthy of credit, was too liberally beſtowed upon him. Pity it is that a perſon of a ſober behaviour, and reputable family ſhould be ſuch a bigot to any name, or party, as to make their neareſt conſort miſerable, and themſelves too, except they will proſtitute their conſcience to the humour or arbitrary will of them and their adviſers. Or otherwiſe be continually harraſſed with reproach and ridicule, I know there are too many ſuch caſes in the world. And if it was not too much the caſe of the unhappy family I am ſpeaking of, I am wrong informed, and particularly by perſons no ways related to the deceaſed, and therefore the leſs to be ſuſpected of being byaſt. Therefore tho' the caſe is now paſt remedy, otherwiſe than by the repentance of thoſe it may concern; yet for the caution, and if it may be, prevention of the like miſtaken ſteps in others, is mention made hereof in this place; as alſo to ſet matters in a true light with regard to the firſt riſe of thoſe differences, which are at laſt, come to this unhappy iſſue: Nor ſhould it in this manner have been

been done by me, but for ſome motives not to be expoſed to vulgar knowledge. Yet I cannot diſmiſs it without obſerving to you what a pity it is, that we cannot allow one another in our private families, the liberty of a different way of thinking, in what God and the government are ſo generouſly indulgent to us in, through the whole nation; without treating one another with ſo much ſpleen and ill nature. The Apoſtle allowed the *Corinthian chriſtians*, to cohabit with their idolatrous huſbands, or wives; not knowing but they might be the means of ſaving them. But ſurely then they muſt endeavour to oblige and win them by the pious charms of peace, love and duty, according to the ſtated rules of the chriſtian oeconomy; and not to treat them with almoſt continual affronts and abuſive language, when at any time they ſeem to vary from thoſe ſchemes, and ideas of things which our own humour or education has inured, or accuſtomed us unto. But let it be obſerved further, that the caſe is very different betwixt a heatheniſh idolater, as at *Corinth*, and ſuch as differ from us only in a

in a few externals, agreeing with us at the ſame time in all the fundamentals of the chriſtian faith, and eſſentials of our holy religion; as thoſe muſt needs do who have ſubſcribed to 34 of the 39 articles of the eſtabliſh'd church; as was the caſe we are now upon. And laſtly, had the variation or diſſent aboveſaid, led to bad company, or looſe practice of any kind, or had any other tendency to the loſs or prejudice of the family, there might have been ſome pretence for ſuch clamour and abuſe. But 'tis well known while the deceaſed purſued the religious meaſures in which he was ſo much oppoſed, he was the perfect reverſe to all ſuch irregularities; being very zealous in religion, and no leſs zealous for a holy life, and particularly in his own perſonal conduct; as both thoſe that were his intimates, and thoſe that were his houſehold ſervants have aſſured me. But alas! after he was unhinged, his meaſures broke, and his ſpirits, naturally but too hot, were exaſperated and caſt into an unnatural ferment, he began to think of diverting

verting his over burdened mind, and to give a more agreeable turn to his floating and too much diſtracted thoughts. He thereupon took on with hunters, ſhooters and other merry companions, which preſently drew him to the ale-houſes; and by degrees his troubles wore off, his zeal for religion abated, and his familiarity, and intereſt among his religious acquaintance inſenſibly began to decline; and in a little time he ſunk into the very dregs of idle and vain converſation. And now here was occaſion more than enough for clamour and uneaſineſs at home; and it was as little regarded by him. His heart now grew hard, his conſcience ſilent, good advice loſt, and the word of God neglected and forgot; and inſtead of theſe, his head was now frequently filled with ſtrong liquor, and his mouth with oaths, idle ſongs, or obſcene and filthy diſcourſe; and when at any time he was a little ſober, and ſolitary, his conſcience grew full of guilt, and his heart of fears, and terrors. But now alaſs! He had got a ready, tho' dangerous way of relief. Away now he went

to

to his diverſions, to the ale-houſe, or to ſome of his new aſſociates. This was now his common courſe, to the no ſmall grief of his wife and other relations, waſting of his eſtate, and ruining his reputation. Oh! unhappy caſe, unhappy indeed, thus to turn aſide to crooked ways, and to drive ſo furiouſly on therein; what could be expected from it? But that which unhappily followed upon it, viz. the breaking up of his family, the ſurrender of his eſtate to pay his debts, and the expoſing of himſelf more and more to ſin and temptation; and ſo far was he now from putting on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he made all poſſible proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfill the luſts thereof, and even to work wickedneſs with greedineſs. But 'tis no pleaſure to me to exaggerate hereupon, however it is to no other end, but that by his harms others may learn to beware, and carefully to avoid forbidden paths; for if God forbid the path, we may be ſure there is danger in the way; what elſe can ſabbath-breaking and the neglect of God's word and worſhip, produce on the one hand, and horrid ſwearing

ing, drunkeneſs, whoredom, and quarrelſome behaviour, on the other; can any thing leſs be expected than the drawing down upon us the hatred of God, the utter diſlike of good men, together with the worſt of dangers upon ourſelves, in both worlds. But ſome may ſay ſtolen waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant; ſin is very charming, and has a pleaſing reliſh to the fleſh. *Anſwer*; but had *Zimri* peace who ſlew his maſter? Does not God ſay there is no peace to the wicked? Had the deceaſed any peace in his exorbitant courſes even in his career, when at any time he was ſerious? No far otherwiſe! Oh! the deep ſighs, and heart-renting groans, that at ſuch times he was obſerved to abound with. What reſtleſs and weariſome nights did he often undergo as his mother has told me? But alaſs! when guilt and the ſenſe of his ſins lay heavieſt upon him, inſtead of melting down before the Lord in a way of true repentance, and falling at the foot of a compaſſionate God, thro' a dying Saviour, his unhappy way was to fall in among his profligate

companions, and in a daring, carouſing way to ſtifle convictions, and ſtupify his conſcience, and in that ungodly manner to work off all fear of God and inward ſenſe of danger. But how prepoſterous is this way of acting? As if a man ſhould heap on coals to prevent the burning of the fire; or to avoid drowning ſhould leap into the ſea.

How much better is it to fly youthful luſts, and to hate the very garments ſpotted by the fleſh? How good is *Solomon*'s advice, *Prov.* iv. 14. 15. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and paſs away.* Prov. i. 10. *If ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not.*

But the time would fail to take notice of all the varieties of the more vitiated part of his life, together with the different ſcenes of action, which either of neceſſity, or of choice, he was led into; with the different iſſues thence reſulting, till his laſt fatal cataſtrophy. Sometimes he was ſociable, and affable, and very obliging; which was conſiſtent enough what

with his natural temper, if it had not been vitiated. Sometimes too ſullen and melancholy, eſpecially when guilt and fear lay heavy upon him; but almoſt always unhappy in chuſing a wrong method of relief, by the uſe or rather abuſe of ſtrong drink, among rude and extravagant companions; and to maintain the exorbitancies of this courſe of life, he was but too forward of borrowing money of his relations and friends; but too regardleſs of, and careleſs about the refunding or paying back of the ſame.

Thus like *Iſaiah*'s troubled ſea, *Iſaiah* vii. 20. He went on thro' manifold toſſings, both of body and mind; ſometimes at home, ſometimes abroad, until the fatal accident happened which brought his ſorrowful exit, which we now commemorate. On which account I deſire your patience till I briefly diſpatch three things.

I. To give ſome ſhort account of what befel him before his laſt impriſonment.

II. Concerning his repentance. And

III. His conduct after his condemnation, both in priſon, and at his execution.

To the 1ſt. It is well known, that upon his firſt apprehenſion he made his eſcape; and tho' ſome imagined he went not far from home, yet as himſelf has ſince aſſured me, he went as far as *Portſmouth*, and entred himſelf there on board a man of war called the *Victory*, on board which *Sir John Norris* had hoiſted the royal flag; *Prince William*, *Duke* of *Cumberland*, being on board alſo at the ſame time. In this ſituation he ſaid he carried himſelf ſo well, that he preſently gain'd the reſpect of his maſters, and was by them intruſted with the ſtrong beer and other liquors; which opportunity had he prudently improved to the beſt advantage, he might thro' the Prince's favour, have very probably paved a way for his future ſafety; but being too dilatory, on that account, orders came preſently down from the board of Admiralty for *Sir John Norris* to put to ſea with the fleet on the intended expedition. Accordingly all things being preſently

preſently put in order, the whole fleet was quickly under ſail, with a fair wind. But before they got clear off the coaſt, the wind tackt about, and the ſtorm grew ſo high, and the ſea ſo rough, that it was judged beſt and ſafeſt, to put back again into the harbour. And then I preſume it was that the *Lyon* man of war, drove foul on the *Victory*; which he told me was very ſhocking; and, but that both the *Prince* and *Sir John* acted with an uncommon preſence of mind on that occaſion, it might have had much worſe conſequence.

After this the fleet ſet ſail a ſecond time, with a fair wind, deſigning if poſſible to work their way forward. But the wind again turning, and the ſtorms ariſing as before, or rather with greater Violence, the admiral having firſt conſulted with the proper officers of the fleet, thought it moſt requiſite to return to their proper rendezvous. But obſerve how theſe matters wrought with our afflicted criminal. His conſcience ſmote him all this while; and it was born in upon his thoughts, with no ſmall

terror, that he was the Jonah, that did trouble the fleet, and that it was for his ſake, that the whole fleet miſcarried. Methinks I ſee with what concern and agitation of mind, he told me of this matter. It was eaſy to perceive it was no fictitious pretence, but really the ſentiment of his moſt ſerious thoughts. O how dreadful a thing is it, to be loaded with guilt. Who can fly from a wounded conſcience? a wounded ſpirit, ſaith Solomon, who can bear?

But methinks, ſome one may be deſirous to know how the deceaſed bore up under ſuch preſſures. The anſwer is, I aſkt him about it, and he told me, that when the fleet was returned to Spithead, he deſired of his maſters leave to go on ſhore, a little while for his refreſhment; which was allow'd him, on condition he would return in time to ſerve them with beer in the evening. Accordingly being got on ſhore, he fell to his old method of drinking cares away, and removing the trouble of his mind by ſtupifying his ſenſes with ſtrong drink, and diverting company; a very improper method;

thod; for inſtead of removing the maladie it greatly increaſes it. 'Tis like adding fuel to the fire; or to pay off an old ſcore by adding another, and the latter the greater.

But thus it was; and in about 3 days he returned on ſhipboard, but his maſters told him they had got another hand, and had no further occaſion for him. Whereupon he returned again to this country; and by what fatal advice we know not, out of a fond opinion that there would be no proſecution againſt him, he was perſuaded to ſurrender himſelf a priſoner, and take his tryal at Lancaſter the next aſſizes, and ſecure his eſtate by preventing an outlawry that was ſuing out againſt him, as one that was fled from juſtice. But enough of this. The ſequel was; to priſon at Lancaſter he went; the tryal came on; and a vehement proſecution appeared to be carried on againſt him, which iſſued in his condemnation. Learn hence the danger of an ill-grounded confidence, which has occaſioned multitudes to ſplit upon the rock of vain preſumption.

Hereupon,

Hereupon 'tis eaſy to imagine what a ſurprizing diſappointment it muſt be to him, when he looked for nothing but a general concurrence of all things in order to his acquitment; inſtead thereof he found every thing go againſt him. The application of his friends in his favour proved feeble and ineffectual, and iſſued rather to his prejudice than relief; while on the other hand the efforts of his adverſaries appeared harmonious, and forcible, and at once bore down all hopes of his deliverance, which, afterwards, was made of good uſe to him, to let him ſee the vanity of all human dependencies, and how little is to be expected from the beſt concerted meaſures, when the hand of God is gone out againſt us.

And now the melancholy ſcene was opened. Approaching death threw off it's vizard, and began to appear bare-faced; and now ſin the parent of death, and ſpring-head of all his ſorrows, began to return upon his thoughts; a concern for his ſoul, which before this time were tranſient and fluctuating, began now to fix and grow more real, and ſolid; yet

yet I cannot omit to note, one malignant attempt of the enemy at this time, which was to induce and prompt him on to famiſh and ſtarve himſelf; inſinuating that as exceſs in ſtrong drink had been a continual ſnare to him, and a chief means of his infatuation and manifold misfortunes, ſo the likelieſt way to atone for former folly was to deny himſelf and mortifie the fleſh by extraordinary abſtemiouſneſs, or impoſing an extraordinary faſt upon himſelf, even to a total diſuſe of natural food. So pleaſing was this dangerous inſinuation to him, that he was preſently almoſt come to a full reſolution to ſignalize and agrandize himſelf, by totally forbearing the uſe of natural food, as a voluntary penance impoſed upon himſelf; and if thereby he ſhould ſacrifice his life, it would not only ſhew him to be a man of reſolution and fortitude, but be leſs reproachful to him and his friends, than to make his laſt exit at the gallows; not conſidering the advantage the enemy would hereby gain over him, both in drawing down the guilt of ſelf-murder upon

upon him in regard of the body, and alſo in bringing ſure and certain damnation upon his immortal ſoul, by depriving him of the means of grace, and effectually rendring it impoſſible for him to repent and turn to God through faith in his Son, in or during the day of grace; which was certainly the malignant deſign of the wicked one, in this pernicious and dangerous temptation. And as himſelf told me, it was 2 or 3 days before he could be perſuaded to take any due relief; nor had he done it with any freedom when I firſt came to him in the priſon.

But it muſt be confeſt it was a great happineſs to him, that he came under the pious and diligent care of the Revd. *Dr. Fenton*, who ſhewed a ſingular concern for him, and was no leſs aſſiſting to him from the paſſing the ſentence upon him, to the time of his execution; which after I underſtood, it made me the more wonder upon what motives, or by what inducements, I was ſent for. But ſo it was: Nothing could ſatisfy him without ſignifying to his parents by a letter,

his

his earneſt deſire that they would endeavour to prevail with me to come and attend him, with what expedition might be, in his preſent dolorous condition; for he could with moſt freedom open his heart to me, and beſt to his ſatisfaction receive inſtruction from me; by laying open his dying thoughts, and ſurrendring his departing ſoul into the hands of the great redeemer of men, who alone was able to forgive his ſins, and notwithſtanding his execrable violences, crown him with immortality and eternal life.

Accordingly his affectionate parents made a very preſſing application to me; that notwithſtanding my advanced age, diſtance of place, or frequent labours, I would for this once endeavour to diſpence with all; and not only for their ſakes, but chiefly out of a tender regard to their diſconſolate ſon, as a dying man I would do this; and the rather as he expreſt ſuch a deſire to ſee me, they the more ardently intreated me not to fail in going to ſee him, and to aſſiſt and comfort him in the beſt manner I could, if

by

by any means he might obtain mercy; that the hard lot he had met with in the wilderneſs of this world, might at laſt terminate in an everlaſting inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan* of peace, and reſt with God above in glory.

It's true at firſt I found an averſion in my mind hereunto, ariſing partly from a ſenſe of my own inſufficiency, and partly from an apprehenſion that my labour would be in vain; for I little expected to find him in ſuch an humble, penitent frame, as thro' boundleſs mercy I happily did. But after more mature conſideration, backt with the importunity of ſome friendly and well-diſpoſed neighbours, formerly his acquaintance, who ſeemed to have much greater expectations from the iſſue, than I could any ways conceive of it; I was prevail'd with, tho' 30 miles diſtance to undertake the journey. Accordingly committing myſelf and the whole affair to God, I prepared myſelf for it. And upon a ſuppoſition that I ſhould find him in the low Jail, where I could expect no due convenience for ſuch ſervices and diſcourſes, as the caſe would

would neceſſarily require, I inſtantly drew up in writing what ſeemed to me moſt requiſite in the caſe; which would at leaſt expedite my deſigned work, and alſo facilitate the attainment of my propoſed end. And thro' mercy I was not herein diſappointed, for altho' when I came to him I found him much better acommodated with a convenient room in the day-time, and other civilities, (I ſpeak it to the honour of the priſon, and more eſpecially of them that govern it,) far beyond what I expected.

Yet it being pretty late when I firſt came to him, after a little diſcourſe I left him, leaving with him the paper which I had prepared, deſiring him to read, and ſeriouſly conſider it, and I would ſee him again the next morning.

Next morning being come together, he firſt gave me many thanks for coming to ſee and aſſiſt him, in his preſent diſconſolate condition. I told him I was very ſorry to find him in ſuch a caſe, and that he had had no more regard to a future ſtate, than to ſacrifice his time, forfeit his life, and in ſuch a dangerous

manner to hazard his immortal ſoul, as now it appear'd he had done. Hereupon at firſt he began to complain of, and reflect upon certain perſons, that had been proſecutors of him, and witneſſes againſt him: Whereupon I told him, that I was not come to recognize the matter or manner of his tryal, or re-examine the proceſs that had been carried on againſt him. The iſſue was fixed, and ſentence paſt; and now I could look on him no otherwiſe than as a dying man, that had but a very few days to live; and therefore it was now, both his ſpecial and immediate duty to repent from the heart, of all his heinous offences, that had been ſo notorious, as thus to expoſe him to all the world, in ſo publick and ignominious a manner; and in the moſt humble manner to apply himſelf to the God of all grace, for peace and pardon, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. This gentle reprehenſion and advice, he took very kindly, and told me I ſhould hear no more from him any ſuch complaints; being very ſenſible that ſincere repentance was his higheſt and moſt immediate concern, and

that the main reaſon of his ſending for me, was to be directed and aſſiſted therein. But ſaid he (with a flow of tears) where does it appear, that ever ſo great a ſinner, has been known to repent, ſo as to obtain mercy.

I anſwered yes, *Manaſſeh* was a great idolater, and made his children paſs thro' the fire to *Moloch*; a ſuperſtitious obſerver of times, uſed inchantments and witchcraft, and dealt with familiar ſpirits, that is in plain engliſh converſed with Devils, defiled God's holy temple and worſhip with his own inventions, and made the inhabitants of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* to do worſe than the heathen, whom God had caſt out before them; to all which was added the contempt of God's word, ii. *Chron.* xxxiii. 10. Now though it is too apparent you have been a ſinner of the firſt rank, yet cannot your ſins be ſuppoſed to be greater than *Manaſſeh's*. He replyed I have not much taken notice of thoſe paſſages; but this character of him looks black; and did he after all this repent and obtain God's mercy and pardon for ſo great enormities?

I anſwered yes; ſee ii. *Chron.* xxxiii. 4. 12. 13. God chaſtiſed him ſeverely by the ſword of the king of *Aſſyria*; *and when he was in affliction he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and brought again to Jeruſalem. Then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord, he was God.* Surely ſuch a precedent deſerves both your obſervation and imitation.

And in particular I would from hence have you obſerve. I. That a great ſinner may repent by the grace of God. II. God ſometimes draws ſinners to repentance with bands of love, and ſometimes drives them with the rod of correction. The latter was *Manaſſeh*'s caſe. God grant it may now be yours alſo. For as one obſerves, if love and mercy will not reclaim us, judgment and the hammer muſt. They that have refuſed to turn to the Lord in the roſy path of mercy, may be glad if he will receive them in the thorny path of correction. Precious grace can either way bring a ſinner to Chriſt, and by him to the father

ther of mercies. Alaſs! is not your caſe much the ſame with *Manaſſeh*'s? God a long time waited upon you, to be gracious to you; while you like *Jeſhurun* kicked againſt him, and run away after your lovers. But now he has hedged up your way with thorns, that you cannot overtake them. He has brought you into the wilderneſs; and there he is now pleading with you. Humble yourſelf therefore under his mighty hand. Who knows but that he may yet leave a bleſſing behind him? He has reſerved gifts for the rebellious; put in your claim for a portion I intreat you, but let it be in the profoundeſt humility. Who knows but that the Lord may be pleaſed to chuſe you in this furnace of affliction; and give you this valley of *Achor*, or trouble for a door of hope? *Iſaiah* xlviii. 10. *Joſ.* vii. 26. And if God ſhall pleaſe to deliver your ſoul from death, and bring you forth of this horrible pit, and ſet your feet upon the rock, againſt which the gates of hell cannot prevail, a new ſong may yet be put into your mouth, which though you may not

have opportunity to ſet forth to his praiſe with good *David* on earth, yet when you come to the palm-bearing company, ſuch a ſong of the Lamb will well become the *Mount-Sion* triumph above in glory.

Hereupon tears flowed into his eyes, and with uncommon concern, and tenderneſs, he confeſſed that tho' his ſorrow was, and his ſuffering in a little while was like to be, very great, yet it was but his deſert; the fruit of his irregular and exorbitant life. For tho' he was far from ſubſcribing to every thing common fame had laid to his charge, yet he had ſuch a real ſenſe of his innumerable provocations againſt God, and heinous load of guilt, that lay upon his conſcience on that account, that had he ten thouſand worlds, he ſhould look upon them as ſo many trifles, compar'd with the invaluable mercy of having all his ſins pardoned, and the remembrance of them for ever blotted out; and would God be pleaſed in any way, either roſey, or thorny, to bring him to himſelf, it would be in very deed, as life from the dead

dead. In the valley of *Achor*, I am in ſome ſort like another *Achan*. Should God indeed give me my vineyards from thence, and make it a door of hope unto me, on account of life everlaſting; then wou'd I call the bleſſed Jeſus no more *Baali*, but he ſhou'd be my dear *Iſhi*, for evermore *Hoſe*. ii. 15, 16.

To which I told him, ſuch an *Iſhi*, ſuch a huſband would relieve, and enrich him for ever. But according to *Rom*. vii. 4. Except he was firſt dead to the law, he could not be married to another. Except it be thus, you are under a double condemnation. Your body alaſs for you! is under condemnation by the law of the nation; and both your body and ſoul are under eternal condemnation by the righteous law of God. That the ſentence of the law of the nation ſhould be reverſed I can conceive no hopes; but that the ſentence of the law of God may be reverſed, and you redeemed from the curſe, I think may eaſily be demonſtrated. To which he readily and very affectionately replyed, I

pray

pray you give me now that demonſtration.

Well then ſaid I mind the words but juſt now quoted. *Rom.* vii. 4. Ye are dead to the law, or divorced from it by the body of Chriſt. Note this, by the body of Chriſt; becauſe the body of Chriſt is ſubſtituted and put in our law place. The wiſdom of God ordering, and his juſtice requiring, that the ſame nature that ſinned ſhould yield ſatisfaction; the ſame nature that contracted the debt ſhould procure the diſcharge, by paying the debt and cancelling the obligation. The human nature had ſinned and contracted the debt, but the human nature in us, or as it was ours, could yield no ſatisfaction, make no payment; therefore Chriſt comes in and by a new and ſecond covenant as our ſurety and fœderal head, and becomes bound to his father on our behalf, to aſſume our nature, and bear our ſin in his own body. i. *Pet.* ii. 24. *Iſaiah* liii. 6.. And at the ſame time by his active obedience, in the days of his fleſh, to anſwer the demands of the law, and by his paſſive obedience

at

at his death, to ſatisfy juſtice in our room and ſtead. *Thus he was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* ii. *Cor.* 5. ult. *whereby he puts an end to ſin,* and finiſhes tranſgreſſion, and brings in everlaſting righteouſneſs *Dan.* ix. 24. *Jer.* li. 10. Thus when the ſurety or bondsman pays the debt, the debtor is diſcharged; and thus we are freed from, or dead to the law, by the body of Chriſt; and this our freedom from the law, and by conſequence from the curſe or malediction thereof, is ratified and confirmed by our being married to another, even to Jeſus Chriſt; even to him whom God hath raiſed from the dead. And what is our being married to him, but our being united to him by faith in a new covenant way; being before dead accurſed and undone. This therefore is what I would bring it to, even to direct and urge you as a poor condemned, undone ſinner, to come in the profoundeſt humility to Jeſus Chriſt. Proſtrating yourſelf before him, caſt your care upon him, and ſurrender your ſoul into his tender,

tender, and compaſſionate arms. Repoſe your whole truſt in his merits, and the heavenly father's mercy, truſting in his faithful promiſe, and the ſure everlaſting covenant, of which he is alone mediator. ii. *Sam.* xxii. 5. *Heb.* viii. 6.

Hereunto he very gravely replyed, I am very glad to hear ſo clear an account of theſe foundation points. Methinks they comfort my mind not a little, and are unto me as a ſhining light, amidſt thoſe clouds of diſtractions, which on each hand ſurround me; and ſeem not a little to encourage my repentance, and naturally lead me to the mercy ſeat of the almighty father, and to the meritorious paſſion of his eternal ſon, for deliverance from ſin and the law; ſo that were my caſe common, I could even run with the utmoſt pleaſure to Chriſt, and to heaven by him. But admit that as bad as I have repented and found pardon, yet alaſs! I have no time to repent. Oh! 'tis a great work! Little did I think heretofore that repentance had been a work of ſuch weight and difficulty, as I now find it to be. Oh! what would I now give for

for a year, nay a month's time to repent in, and form my thoughts, and the diſpoſitions of my ſoul for heaven. But three days alaſs! but three days! Oh! how great a work, and how little time have I now before me. Whereupon he wept and wrung his hands, crying Oh my ſoul! my poor ſoul! What danger art thou in? Alaſs! alaſs! What will become of thee three days hence? What will become of thee?

Really my heart bled for him. I thought I con'd never forget what I then ſaw in him, and heard from him; and I hope I ſhall not, ſo as not to make a ſerious uſe and improvement of it. But as to the ſhortneſs of his time, I made him this reply; my dear *Laurence*, I am heartily concerned for you, and do as really ſympathize with you, and wiſh your carouſing companions, and all the gallants of the day, had but a due ſenſe with you, of what their ſins and follies will bring them to, except repented of in time. And for your part, I bleſs God from my heart, that has opened your eyes, before, with *Dives*, you lift them

up

up in hell. I confeſs your time is ſhort, very ſhort; but yet I can aſſure you, there is hope in *Iſrael*, concerning this thing. *Ezra* x. 2. A broken heart, God will not deſpiſe. And I hope I may certainly conclude yours to be ſuch. But I pray conſider the thief upon the Croſs. If we ſpeak of ſhortneſs of time; his time was ſhort indeed, and yet proved long enough to lodge him in paradiſe at night; and I hope yours will be long enough to uſher your poor ſoul into an eternal day. Let not the ſhortneſs of your time diſcourage you, now you are awake. It is not the long continuance of the work, but the reality, and truth, that makes a ſincere convert. Fall down inſtantly at the footſtool of mercy, in true humility, deeply debaſing your ſelf before God, on the account of your ſins, and ſue for pardon and peace at his gracious hands, thro' the alone mediation and merit of the Lord Jeſus; and be like holy *David*, give no ſleep to your eyes, nor ſlumber to your eye-lids, till you have found out a place for the Lord in your boſom, an habitation for the mighty God of *Jacob*. I doubt

you

you have had but ſorry in-mates there in times paſt. O conſecrate your heart now to the Lord, who has ſtood long at your door knocking, and I hope he is not yet removed. Open the door to him, with a warm heart; and I doubt not but you will find him ready to come in to you, and ſup with you, and you with him. But tho' I fear you have but poor entertainment for him, yet if you give him but your heart, a humble, and broken heart, he will not deſpiſe.

He readily replyed; the thief upon the croſs met with mercy indeed, and a nonſuch opportunity, to be both literally and ſpiritually crucified with Chriſt at the ſame time. Beſides 'tis no wonder that Chriſt upon the croſs ſhould be honoured with the converſion of a ſinner. While the price of redemption was paid down, no wonder ſuch a bleſſed ſpecimen was ſet forth to declare the efficacy and validity of the purchaſe. But poor worthleſs I, hitherto every way unfortunate, am ſo bowed down under the proſpect and weight of my own vileneſs that I cannot look up. Surely I am the

Publican's ſecond, not worthy to lift up mine eyes to heaven; and moſt heartily can I ſay with him Lord, yea the Lord that has choſen *Jeruſalem*, have mercy upon me. And whereas you tell me of his ſtanding at my door and knocking, it adds bitterneſs to my gall, to think how like I have been to the deaf Adder, *that would not hear the voice of ſuch a charmer*, as he is repreſented, *Cant.* v. 2. Oh! how it grieves me to think how I have ſlighted him, and prefer'd not only vain, but baſe, yea very baſe, both things and practices, before him and his amiable ways. Again you tell me that God gives me time to repent, tho' I have now alaſs! cut it ſhort by my own inventions. I know it is ſo; and I bleſs his name for time. But my ſins are not only many, but exceeding great and heniouſly aggravated, even to the expoſing me to the ſeverities of the laws of men. And is it poſſible there ſhould be any bowels of compaſſion with him whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, for ſuch a wretch as me? *Lord have mercy upon me!*

Alaſs,

Alaſs, alaſs, for you! ſaid I. I am in pain for you; yet ſtill comforted in this, that I firmly believe that he who has begun this good work, will perfect it; he has wounded you and will heal you; he hath broken you, and will bind you up. As to the greatneſs of your ſins I confeſs they are heinous; but yet they exceed not the caſe of *David*, in his adultery with *Bathſheba* and murder of *Uriah*. For the former I doubt you are not behind with him; but as to his killing of *Uriah*, the act in him was premeditated and carried on by policy, and deliberated contrivance; which I ſuppoſe was far from your caſe, tho' God knows it was deſperate enough; but I hope not premeditated. *David*'s act was without provocation from the innocent *Uriah*; but you aſſure me it was far otherwiſe in your caſe; which yet I ſpeak not to extenuate your crime or leſſen your guilt, but to ſhew, that as *David*, notwithſtanding the heniouſneſs of his offence, and the high aggravations of it, found mercy upon his unfeigned repentance; ſo undoubtedly ſhall you, if in like man-

ner you apply yourſelf to the Father of mercies, thro' Chriſt our alone mediator. In ſhort, this is no caſe to dally in; nor is there any time to heſitate. Reſolve upon the matter; and as ſoon as company is withdrawn, retire yourſelf in the beſt manner you can, and fall down before the Lord in the deepeſt humility and ſelf abaſement, and more and more confeſs your ſins, and pour out your very heart in ſincere and godly contrition for them; and accordingly intreat the father of mercies to forgive and pardon you in every thing, in the name and for the ſake of his dear and only Son, according to thoſe infinite bowels of tender compaſſion, which moved him to give his Son, and the Son to give himſelf, for the redemption of ſuch rebellious ones as you have been. And remember, for your incouragement, the almoſt innumerable promiſes that God has every where diſperſed thro' his word, for the ſupport and comfort of poor penitent ſinners, in their return unto him; whereby he has engaged himſelf to receive and relieve them that truly ſeek unto him, in and thro' Chriſt

Chriſt, according to that admirable text i. Epiſtle of *John* i. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* See how God has engaged himſelf in juſtice and faithfulneſs to forgive you, and to cleanſe you by the blood of his Son, in juſtifying you, and by the grace of his holy ſpirit in ſanctifying you; all which he wrought out for, and unto the thief on the croſs in one day, viz that remarkable day which was both the day of his crucifixion and of his converſion. And he will do no leſs for you, notwithſtanding the ſhortneſs of your time, if you repent ſincerely. Thus I left him with a heart full of concern for him; and not a little did I wreſtle with God on his behalf that night. When I came to him again next morning, I found theſe diſcourſes had had a good effect upon him; that he had been warmly engaged at the throne of grace for pardon and eternal life; and that he began to have ſome buddings of hope in God's mercy. And methought he ſpoke of Chriſt with a greater air of of chearfulneſs than I had obſerved before.

Whereupon, by mutual agreement, we firſt returned our ſolemn thanks to God for his ineſtimable favour; and by earneſt prayer, ſollicited the throne of his heavenly grace, to direct, aſſiſt, and bleſs us that day; alſo for our mutual comfort, and more eſpecially for his further eſtabliſhment and illumination in the things which ſo immediately, as well as eminently, belong unto his peace. After which he began to ſay he found himſelf much like to the unhappy Iſraelites, that fled for refuge to thoſe cities God had graciouſly ſet apart for their ſafety, from the avenger of blood; where being once arrived, and remaining, they abode ſecure from future danger. But, ſaid he, I ſpeak not in regard of my Body, which already, God knows, is dead in law, but in regard of my invaluable ſoul; for if that be ſafe, I know that my body at the laſt reſurrection, ſhall in every ſenſe be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

To which I replyed, your diſcourſe brings to my mind, *Heb.* vi. 18. *That*

by

by too immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us. Now it is evident, that the two immutable things, wherein it was impoſſible for God to lye, are the promiſe of God to *Abraham*, concerning the ſeed in which all nations of the earth were to be bleſſed, and the oath of God whereby that promiſe was confirmed; when becauſe he cou'd ſwear by no greater, he ſwore by himſelf. Theſe two, the promiſe and the oath of God, are both immutable; which in plain terms, is God's promiſe of Chriſt, and Salvation by him, to all true penitents, that are enabled by grace to believe on Chriſt, according to the doctrine of the goſpel, which promiſe God has ſworn by himſelf to perform. In both theſe appears Gods infinite condeſcention and love to the heirs of promiſe; that they might have ſtrong conſolation. And theſe heirs of promiſe are always known by this, that they flee for refuge to lay hold of this hope of ſalvation by Chriſt, who is ſet before them by the goſpel

goſpel. Let me perſuade you this moment to fly for refuge; to lay hold of this hope of the goſpel, which is Chriſt and ſalvation by him. Here you may be ſafe from all avengers whatſoever. This is *Solomon*'s ſtrong tower, into which the righteous run and are ſafe. *Proverbs* xviii. 10. This hope we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt; and which entereth into that within the vail. This is *David*'s everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure, which was all his deſire, and all his ſalvation. 2. *Sam.* xxiii. 5. For the Lord's ſake, and for your ſoul's ſake, let it be yours alſo.

Hereupon with a modeſt ſmile, he returned this anſwer. You have almoſt perſuaded me thus to fly for refuge. I have longed for a ſafe ſanctuary, at times, this long while. But ſtill my thoughts have turned upon this, whither ſhall I fly? This noble ſcripture, which I confeſs I never conſider'd, nor underſtood, ſo well before, plainly tells me, both whither, and alſo for what, I ſhall fly, and the endleſs comfort and ſafety that ſhall follow thereupon. But I pray be ſo free with me,

me, as to anſwer theſe few queſtions. Suppoſing me to be really ſenſible of, and truly ſorry for my ſins (which I am if I underſtand my own heart;) and as to faith in Chriſt, if I do not believe, I can ſincerely ſay, I deſire in the bottom of my heart ſo to do; nay more, I had rather have Chriſt than a thouſand worlds; now hereupon I query; *If I fly for refuge, as this ſcripture directs, is there an open door before me?* Anſwer, yes. Query 2d. *Will Chriſt receive me?* Anſwer, yes. *And will the heavenly Father ſmile upon me, and be reconciled to me?* Anſwer, yes. The firſt anſwer is grounded upon *Rev.* iii. 8. *Behold I ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it.* The ſecond is grounded upon *John* vi. 37. *He that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* And the third on 2. *Cor.* v. 19. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, &c. Whereupon he then anſwer'd, *By the grace of God, I am determined to fly for refuge to the hope ſet before me*; and as Queen Eſther ſaid, *If I periſh I periſh*; or with the lepers at the gate of Samaria, *If they ſave us, we ſhall live*; *If they kill*

us,

as, we can but die. And fain would I ſay with *Job*; *If he kill me, yet will I truſt in him.* But how difficult a thing is it, to truſt in time of difficulty and danger. But Oh! may I venture to ſay, with the man in the goſpel; *I believe*; *Lord help my unbelief.*

Hereto I anſwered. *Be not fearful but believing. Though you walk in darkneſs and have no light, yet truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay yourſelf upon your God.* Iſaiah l. 10 O how good is that word, *now is the accepted time.* Yet with you it is ſtinted. 'Tis now within the compaſs of two natural days that you muſt be accepted, or otherwiſe he that is filthy muſt be filthy ſtill. Oh! how much depends upon this inch of time. Well may it be called precious time. Let me therefore beg of you now, even now, to kiſs the ſon; elſe holy *David* ſhews you that the Son will be angry; and his anger when thus ſlighted, is burning anger, even to the loweſt hell. See 2d. *Pſalm* 12th. *verſe*; which words preſs upon you another motive to believe; for if you do not kiſs the Son,

that

that is believe on the Son, he will be angry. And would you ruin yourſelf to grieve him, ſee the 7th. *Pſalm* xi. 12. *God is angry with the wicked every day.* Why is he angry? Becauſe they turn not; that is becauſe they believe not; therefore it follows, *if he turn not he will wet his ſword.* And what will follow then, ſee in *Deut.* xxxii. 41. Chriſt is ſo far from being backward to receive you when you come to him, that he will be angry if you do not come. If you turn not he will wet his ſword, yea ſaith *Moſes* his glittering ſword; and his hand will take hold on vengeance. You will alſo vex and grieve his holy ſpirit; nay more, it is accounted deſpite done to the ſpirit of his grace, *Heb.* x. 29. Therefore let nothing diſcourage you. Let nothing hinder you by any means. Would you anger Chriſt? Would you vex the holy ſpirit, and nail down the wrath of God the Father upon your poor ſoul? ſee *John* iii. 36. I know you would not, but will readily ſay God forbid; and let me ſay do you forbid it alſo, by an humble, penitential applicati-

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on to Chriſt, and to the heavenly Father in him; and to this end the Lord ſtrengthen you with might by his ſpirit in your inward man. And to ſtrengthen your hearts and hands yet the more, in this weighty work, let me lay two arguments more before you.

1ſt. If the Lord take pleaſure in them that fear him, in thoſe that hope in his mercy, then certainly he will accept you in your application to him for mercy. The former is true; ſee *Pſal.* 147. 11. therefore ſo is the latter. To the ſame purpoſe is, *Pſal.* 33, 18. *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy.* His eye is upon you and his heart alſo, let your eye and heart be upon him.

2dly. If the Lord delight in mercy, that is in ſhewing mercy, then will he not only receive you, but even delight in you. The former is true, ſee *Micah* vii. 18. ſo alſo is the latter. See the emphaſis of this phraſe, *delighteth in mercy.* He delights in mercy as an attribute. He delights in mercy as an act, i. e. he delights in exerciſing, or ſhewing mercy.

And

And let me add, he delights in them that thankfully and humbly receive mercy, and improve it in his fear, and to his glory; and ſurely you would, after an inexpreſſible manner delight in receiving mercy while you live; and I doubt not you, who deſire to be an inſtrument of his glory as well as a monument of his mercy, would delight in improving God's mercy to the glory of his name, were your life to be continued, as well as to receive mercy for the good of your ſoul.

He anſwered; dear Sir, you make my heavy heart riſe, and my ſpirit rejoice, to hear that the Lord of life is not only willing but ready, nay deſirous, to receive ſuch ſinful wretches as worthleſs I; nay more, that he will be angry if I come not; nay yet more ſtill, that the ever-glorious Father, Son, and holy ſpirit, are repreſented by the ſcriptures of truth as highly reſenting the neglects, but eſpecially the contempts of ſinners, againſt the goſpel. Oh! my ſoul, mourn in ſecret places for thy contempts, which have been ſo great and many againſt the

honour of Chriſt and thy own ſafety. But now I come dear Lord Jeſus to lay my ſoul in the duſt at thy feet, to ſue in the deepeſt humility for peace and pardon. Oh! let not thy wrath (at which my ſoul trembles) wax hot againſt me; and as thou delighteſt in mercy and takeſt pleaſure in them that hope therein, as I am now informed from thy word let it now pleaſe thee to be merciful unto me, and make me tho' moſt unworthy, a partaker for ever of the joys of thy ſalvation, and an inheritor of thy everlaſting kingdom, thro' the alone merits of Jeſus Chriſt, thy Son and our alone Saviour; and hereunto, thy ſweet word and heavenly promiſes ſo ſeaſonably now explained unto me, hath not only prompted, but I hope effectually drawn me. But Oh! how my heart ungives, and is even ready to ſink within me, when I look down upon my ſelf and that ungodly life I have lived in the world, when I had ſo much light and ſo many inducements and obligations upon me to the contrary.

Hereupon

Hereupon I perceived he began to look pale, and deſpondency began to prevail; whereupon I deſired him to keep his mind ſteadily fixt upon Chriſt, and the promiſes; for there lay his comfort and ſafety, and look not now ſo much upon his ſins; being, as I well hoped, truly humbled, and juſt upon the cloſing point with Chriſt Jeſus. Now it was his wiſdom and ſafety to behold by faith in the word his ſins laid upon Chriſt, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs put upon him, according to *Iſaiah* liii. 6. and 2. *Cor.* v. and the laſt; and by that means *Satan* wou'd ſoon be vanquiſh'd, and all objections tending to diffidence anſwered.

Whereunto with a deep ſigh he replyed; I muſt only ſay with *Job*, behold I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer. And ſeeing his lips began to quiver, I ſtept to him and ſaid, keep your hold of Chriſt and the promiſe. This is the hour, and power of darkneſs. Theſe are the pangs of the new birth. Now you ſee yourſelf the chief of ſinners. I hear you cry out with *Job*, that you are vile. I

own it, you are ſo, and ſo am I; but what ſaith the word? Spiders take hold with their hands, and dwell in kings houſes. Now you ſuppoſe yourſelf vile, and therefore fitly enough repreſented by a ſpider. Well; the ſpider lays hold with her hands, and dwells in kings houſes; ſo you taking hold with your hands, of faith, hope, and love, you ſhall dwell in the houſe of the king of kings, notwithſtanding the evils of your heart and life; which now appear with ſuch dreadful aſpect in your eyes, and which the devil ſo ſtrenuouſly labours to improve againſt you, deſigning thereby to drive you to deſpair; to the end that he may keep you back from believing on the Lord Jeſus, which he always hates with a malignant hatred, and therefore will always prevent to the utmoſt of his power.

I perceive, ſaid he, you are aware of the uncommon agitations, now working in my mind. No ſooner did I begin to feel an inward drawing out of my mind towards Chriſt, and ſome ſweet buddings of hope ſpring up in my heart heaven-wards, but all on a ſudden a cold

and

and dark cloud came over me, which threw me into darkneſs, and ſtifled at once, that little hope and comfort, that in ſuch a pleaſing manner, began to ariſe in my ſecret thoughts, about the pardon of my ſins, and a poſſibility of my obtaining acceptance with the Almighty thro' Chriſt the mediator; and but that you perceived it, and ſeaſonably interpoſed with your cautionary inſtructions, I know not what unhappy effect it might have had upon me, nor what diſtractions might have iſſued from it in my poor ſoul; but however, bleſſed be God, the cloud is at preſent removed, and my mind is again freed from thoſe agitations, that all on a ſudden had thrown my thoughts into ſuch an unuſual ferment. I fear it was an aſſault of the wicked one. The Lord preſerve me, and reſcue me, out of his hands at all times.

Alaſs ſaid I, do you not ſee the inveteracy, as well as policy, of this old adverſary; how ſoon he is aware of the tendency of our preſent endeavours, to pluck you as a brand out of the burning fire; and particularly now, when you are up-

on the point of ſurrendring yourſelf over to Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, ſee how he beſtirs himſelf, if by any means he may prevent the eſpouſals betwixt Chriſt and your ſoul. Surely the ſenſe hereof ſhould quicken you in the moſt effectual manner to entertain the goſpel, and cleave to the Lord Jeſus, with full purpoſe of heart. But I ſee our opportunity is over at this time; company is a coming, the Lord be with you, and help that what has been this opportunity, under our ſerious conſideration may be improved; and with the ſpouſe lodge your dear Jeſus all night betwixt your breaſts, and herewith I bid him farewell. The Lord grant us a happy meeting in the morning.

Next morning as I went to pay him another viſit, I happily met with the Revd. *Dr. Fenton*, as he was coming from him; who was ſo kind as to invite me to his houſe, with whom I had very friendly diſcourſe and kind entertainment. He ſpoke very civily of *Lau. Britliffe*, and ſaid he had never a more agreeable perſon in ſuch a circumſtance,

under

under his care. He could not but admire at his proficiency in knowledge, and the humility of his conduct in all the parts of his converſation with him. His ſorrow for his ill-ſpent time, and his concern for his immortal ſoul were both conſpicuous and exemplary, together with his cloſe attendance to a ſerious preparation for his near approaching death. The Doctor told me he had alſo inquired into ſeveral ſcandalous reports concerning him; both as to times paſt, and alſo ſince his coming into priſon; and in ſhort, ſetting aſide what he ſtood condemned for, he could not find but the ſtories of his being guilty of any other murders were without foundation, and ſo alſo was that of his keeping an ill woman with him in the priſon, ſince the time of his commitment; which reports, if they were not malicious, yet he lookt upon them to be very unworthily caſt upon him. I told the Doctor I was very glad to hear it, and that I ſhould forbear to give him any further trouble about thoſe matters, tho' ſome had deſired me to enquire thereunto, for the country's ſatisfaction.

ſatisfaction. In ſhort we mutually, and I believe very ſincerely, lamented his preſent mournful caſe, with very affectionate and joint wiſhes, that the God of all grace might have mercy on him; and that tho' his Sun now ſuffered an eclipſe at it's going down, yet that it might ſet without cloud in regard of a future ſtate; and that his body might riſe again to immortality and eternal life, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Hereupon I very gratefully left the honeſt Doctor, and inſtantly repaired to the diſtreſſed priſoner; whom according to my earneſt wiſhes, when I left him laſt night, I found much more comfortable than before. For as ſoon as I aſkt how it was with him, and what views he yet had of a near approaching eternity; he anſwered, eternity is a very awful thing; but 'tis he that inhabits eternity that my thoughts moſt turn upon; were I but reconciled to him, and matters ſet at rights betwixt him and my ſoul, Oh! then I could be chearful indeed; death would have no ſting, and eternity would

would have no terror. Oh! that God would ſhew me his face and favour in Chriſt Jeſus; for what you have already ſaid to me has abundantly ſatisfied me, there is no coming to the Father but by the Son.

Dear ſoul, ſaid I, you rejoice me to hear theſe things from you this morning. Surely it cannot be, that ſuch a longing ſoul after the ſmiling face of God the Father, and ſo knit to, and dependent upon Chriſt alone for acceptance, can finally miſcarry; and foraſmuch as you are ſo intent upon being reſtored to God's face, and on obtaining further diſplays of his favour in Chriſt Jeſus, let me ſet before you a caſe in many things of like nature, and I pray mind the ſteps taken by God therein. 'Tis the caſe of *Moſes* in *Exod.* xxxiii. 18. *Moſes ſaid, I beſeech thee ſhew me thy glory.* The Lord had been very free with *Moſes*, and had ſpoke with him face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his friend. He was very liberal in the diſtributions of his grace, which made *Moſes* very ambitious to behold his glory. But God's anſwer, firſt was, thou

thou canſt not ſee the face of conſummate glory and live, the moſt illuſtrious diſplaying of my grace, is but comparatively my back. I will make all my goodneſs in a way of grace paſs before, *ver.* 19. And thou ſhalt ſee my back parts, but my face ſhall not be ſeen, *ver.* 23. till mortality be ſwallowed up of life. And ſee now what inſtruction ariſes from the wiſe methods he here obſerves, in the diſtributions and communications of his grace. *ver.* 21. *And the Lord ſaid behold there is a place by me, and thou ſhalt ſtand upon a rock.* and ver. 22. *And I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I paſs by.* Of which words take this plain and comfortable expoſition.

There is a place by me; that is a new covenant relation; I will take thee into a new covenant relation to myſelf, and deal with thee according to the grace thereof; and thou ſhalt ſtand upon a rock, which is Chriſt, the head and mediator of this covenant; and I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, whereon thou ſtandeſt, i. e. thro' the crucifixion and death

death of Chriſt, my Son and thy alone Saviour, thou ſhalt be ſafe from the law and all other ghoſtly dangers, and ſhalt be privileged with, and intitled to all the grace and comfort of the new covenant. And I will cover thee with my hand; i. e. I will protect and ſecure thee, in and thro' my ſon's merit, both the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of all the privileges of the new covenant. From hence its evident, according to the apoſtle, that God muſt ſhine into our hearts, in a new covenant way, to give us the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. ii. *Cor.* iv. 6. Now the face and favour of God, which you deſire ſo earneſtly to ſee, is his reconciled face in Chriſt, revealed to you by grace on earth, not his glorified face in heaven, that is in reverſion for you; obſerve here I pray you, how undeſerved mercy ſets you on the advance hand. Cloſe but with Chriſt by faith, and you become a child of God, in the way of the new covenant, ſo *Gal.* iii. 26. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* Add to this, *Rom.* viii. 17. *And if children then heirs,*

heirs

heirs of God, (and ſure he is a rich father;) *and joint heirs with Chriſt*; for he is the elder brother. Thus God ſhews you the glory of his grace now; but then you muſt be led to all this in God's new and living way. *Heb.* x. 19. 20. which he has conſecrated for us; which is, in ſhort, as before, in the caſe of *Moſes.* You muſt come in the place by him. i. e. into the way of the new covenant. There you muſt ſtand on the rock of Chriſt; and be put in the cliff of this rock; Chriſt crucified is your ſanctuary. There you ſhall be covered with the hand of divine protection. And here, in this bleſſed ſituation, you ſhall have the heights, and depths, lengths, and breadths, of immenſe and rich grace, diſplayed before you. All this you may poſſeſs to-day, and to-morrow being your dying day, what is now reſerved in heaven, ſhall then be unvailed and diſplayed, alſo to your open view; while poor I, in all probability muſt among many others, be left behind, to tugg and toil on, in this vale of tears. Thus the laſt is made firſt, and the firſt laſt, as our Saviour tells us. As an heir

therefore

therefore rejoices when he comes to full age, to enter on his inheritance, ſo in the way of believing may you rejoice, who now ſtand ſo near to an happy eternity. Receive but, believe but, on the Lord in the way of the goſpel, and his language will be to you, to-morrow ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

Accordingly as time and neceſſary buſineſs calls me away, methinks I can leave you with much more ſatisfaction, and even ſurrender you into the hands of the great keeper of *Iſrael*, in whom you have ſo great cauſe to rejoice, for the glory that ſhall be brought unto you, at the glorious appearance of our Lord Jeſus, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe.

And that our mutual comfort may be the greater, and our hope on your account the firmer, pray tell me how your heart ſtands affected towards God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and whether you can leave the world in perfect charity with all men? He anſwered, I dare not boaſt, I know my heart is deceitful, but ſo far as I know my heart, I love God

intirely above all things, and nothing grieves me ſo much, as that I have ſinned againſt him; and that little hope I have in his mercy, on account of the forgiveneſs of theſe my heinous offences, even diſſolves my heart and melts it down before him; ſo that I could rejoyce to lie as in the duſt at his feet, for ever to adore and glorify him. And what ſhall I ſay of the bleſſed Jeſus, my peace and ſafety ſo intirely depends on his merit and mediation, that if I did not love him with all my ſoul, mind and ſtrength, I ſhould deſerve, (nor could I expect any leſs than) that the more grateful earth, ſhould open its mouth and ſwallow me up. *John* ſaith, *we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* i. *John* iv. 19. And I am ſure if I do not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I may well expect to be when the Lord comes, *Anathema Maranatha.*

I anſwered you ſay very well, taking love as a duty performed in a way of gratitude; but here's love of complacency. Love to God ſhews delight in God; as union is the root of communion, ſo love to God always exerts itſelf in preſſing after

after ſellowſhip with God, therefore the ſame *John* ſaith, *Chap.* i. 3. of his i. *Epiſtle. That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us, and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And we cannot have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, but by the Holy Spirit, and ſo we come to have communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; when therefore we ſpeak of love, we always include fruition, for as union is the root of communion or fellowſhip, ſo communion or fellowſhip, is the marrow and glory of union; 'tis ſo in human relation, as between huſband and wife, parents and children, and much more in divine relation betwixt God and his people. I preſs this the more upon you, becauſe 'tis but a few hours before you will be called up to the palm-bearing company on *Mount Zion* above; and then you come to viſion and fruition, communion and fellowſhip conſummated; here on earth you are a Son, and by conſequence an heir, but yet an heir under age; but by

and by you will come to maturity, and enter on the poſſeſſion of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. See *John* iii. 2. Well I hope you love God in ſincerity, and that you ſo love him, as to delight in him? But tell me one word more, are you in charity with all the world? He anſwered yes, if I know my heart. But ſaid I, pray how ſtands your heart affected towards your wife and family now you are a dying man? His anſwer was the preſent diſpoſition of my heart towards 'em, is perfectly cordial. Oh! how gladly would I have ſeen 'em before I dye, my wife eſpecially; but ſince it cannot be, I now declare I am in perfect charity with 'em, and where in any thing they have offended me, I fully and freely forgive them; and could I have ſeen my wife, I would have uſed my utmoſt endeavour, to have obtained the like favour of her; for moſt gladly would I have us to meet with comfort at the laſt reſurrection. This is the whole I ſhall offer on this account at this time. What remains are a few ſuitable and ſerious reflections upon the whole. And

firſt let us return to the argument in our text, and from thence infer. Firſt the neceſſity and excellency of ſetting up and continuing converſe with God, in the way of petition and anſwer betwixt God and us. How diſagreeable is it to live on God's earth, and yet remain ſtrangers to the God of the whole earth. Shall we daily behold heaven, and yet have no converſation in heaven? Shall we be daily directed by the providence of God, and yet never call on the name of God? Shall we hourly live on his bounty, and yet not moſt thankfully and continually depend upon his mercy? But yet more eſpecially has God ſaid; that notwithſtanding the promiſes he has graciouſly made to his people, yet he will be enquired of by his people, to do for them even thoſe things which he has promiſed to them? Then certainly we ſhould enquire of him daily, and petition to him earneſtly. We have every good gift from him, ſhall we not then continually ſeek to him for a ſupply of all our needs, according to his riches in glory by Chriſt Jeſus? He is a God that anſwers his

people; let his people then be callers upon their God.

Secondly, learn hence, that as God is a God that forgives his peoples iniquities, let his people continually depend upon, and fly to him for the pardon of all their ſinful follies. While he is a God that forgives us, let us be a people that repent before him. While he has a heart to pardon, let not us want a heart to pray. Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them. He will do that for his people, that he will not do for all the world. *John* xvii. 9. Let his people then learn to do that for God which the world will not do or cannot do. The world cannot receive the holy ſpirit, but his people can, will, and do receive him. *Pſalm* cx. 3. Our Lord interrogates his people, what do ye more than others? His people thro' his grace can do more than others, and will thro' his power do more than others, although of themſelves they can do nothing. *John* 15. 5.

Thirdly, did God anſwer his people's prayers and forgive their ſins, and yet

take

take vengeance of their inventions. Learn hence.

1ſt. That notwithſtanding all God's acts of grace towards us, yet he ſtill reſerves to himſelf a ſovereign power to correct and chaſtiſe us. 'Tis a Father's juſt prerogative to correct his child. *Heb.* xii. 9. Much more the Father of ſpirits. Learn

2dly. God ſees the ſins of his people, *Amos.* iii. 2. Tho' not with the eye of vindictive juſtice, yet in the way of his fatherly reſentment, not by the former to deſtroy them, but by the latter to chaſtiſe and amend them.

3dly. Be not fond of your own inventions. This brought about man's ruin at firſt. God made man upright, but he ſought out many inventions. Keep in the way of God's inſtitution, and we ſhall never be found in the way to deſtruction; for as his ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, ſo all his paths are peace. He that finds him finds life, *Prov.* viii. 35.

Laſtly let us learn how far we are all run away from God, and how deeply we have

have corrupted our ways; and let us repent and turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy on us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. In the firſt place, you that are the mournful relations of him, whoſe death we now commemorate. I am ſorry that any thing ſhould fall out ſo deeply afflicting, and of ſo ignominious a nature amongſt you. But I am glad that I have ſo good ground to certifie you, that you need not mourn as them that have no hope. I believe that moſt that ſaw him, were in a good meaſure ſatisfied, together with me, that he was not only a true penitent, but a very exemplary one. For my part, becauſe I would not too much depend on my own opinion, I conſulted the Rev. Dr. FENTON, who I muſt needs ſay, took abundance of care of him, and who I take to be as grave and penetrating a gentleman, and as worthy of his place, and character, as moſt I know. And I can aſſure you, he had as candid and charitable thoughts of the deceaſed, and was as well ſatisfied of the truth of his repentance, as I was willing to be. Yet as it

was

was the deceaſed's earneſt deſire, ſo it is mine, that all of you, and eſpecially thoſe of you that are of the ſame family, would take warning by him, and henceforwards ſtudy to live truly ſober, and religious lives. 'Tis undoubtedly the moſt honourable, the moſt comfortable, and the moſt pleaſant and profitable way of living, both to body and ſoul.

And as to all others that hear me, this I wou'd ſay to you, with *Daniel* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, let my council be acceptable to you; and break of your Sins by righteouſneſs, and your iniquities by the fear of God, and ſhewing mercy to the poor, the likelieſt way to lengthen out your tranquillity here, and mark you out for both peace and ſafety in a future ſtate. And pray bear in mind what has occurred to your obſervance in this day's diſcourſe, and chiefly theſe three things. Firſt, to conceive and retain a perfect antipathy to, and an utter abhorrence of, a profane way of living; with the vitious tribe of ſwearers, filthy talkers, and irreligious ſabbath-breakers. Take no part, have no fellowſhip, with ſuch unfruitful

ful works of darkneſs. 2dly. Make religion, and the ſervice of God, your main buſineſs. Be a companion of all that fear God. Keep a due mean betwixt being too great a *Latitudinarian*, and being tied up to a party, to the prejudice of true charity and publick uſefulneſs, always preferring real ſincerity before an empty, ſound, or lifeleſs outward ſhow.

3dly. Dread the thoughts of making ſhipwrack of faith; of beginning in the ſpirit and ending in the fleſh. This was what the deceaſed dreaded in his caſe, moſt of all the dangerous ſteps which he had taken. The thoughts of turning with the Sow that was waſhed to her former wallowing in the mire. How often did he cry out in my hearing, Oh! how happy had I been, if I had been faithful to my profeſſion, and holden on in the good ways of the Lord with which I began?

A Certificate.

FORASMUCH as our honoured friend, the author of the foregoing treatiſe, had not the opportunity to attend our dying friend *Lau. Britliffe*, to his laſt exit, but left him the evening before; and we being determined to continue with him to the laſt end of his life, to accompany, aſſiſt and comfort him in his laſt moments, and to be witneſſes of God's gracious dealings with him, and of his humble penitent and pious conduct, with his patient and hopeful paſſage through all the tryals, terrors, fears and horrors that attended him; with his grave, ſubmiſſive and chriſtian-like deportment, together with his dying councils, exhortations, warnings and tender ardent prayers in priſon and at the place of execution, we do accordingly, at the requeſt of our friend the author

aboveſaid,

aboveſaid, certify the following particulars, which may ſerve to make up what is left ſhort in the narrative above written.

When we firſt came to him the evening before his execution, he ſeemed very much affected with the pains we had taken, and the love we had manifeſted in coming ſome 30 miles in the neglect of our buſineſs, and at our own expence, to ſee ſuch a vile unworthy perſon as he looked upon himſelf to be. Whereupon, with hands lifted up towards heaven, he gave God thanks for our coming, and prayed that the viſit might iſſue in the good of us all, and of himſelf in particular. Next he deſired one of us to go to prayer with him and for him, telling him that it was now a long time ſince they two ſpent a whole night in prayer together, in the lower barn, and wiſhed to God that he had kept his ſtanding, as we had done, then matters had never come to ſuch a paſs with him as now they were.

When prayer was over he again thanked us for coming to ſee him, and deſi-

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red us to continue with him and attend him to his execution, and to pray for him, and particularly for the forgiveneſs of his ſins, which now lay ſo heavy upon him, and that God would lay them on the true ſcape-Goat, to be carried into everlaſting forgetfulneſs.

Next day when he came out of the low Jail, and we waited for him, he came to us and ſaid, he had now brought his time from years to weeks, from weeks to days, and from days to hours. And now, ſaith he, I have ſcarce hours to live, and therefore had need to mind how I ſpend 'em. And indeed he ſeemed to have a double meaſure of warmth and fervency upon his ſpirit, for heaven and the things of another world. And all the morning, from 3 o'Clock to 11 he grew every hour warmer and warmer. In his priſon apartment that was allowed him, he talked like a man for another world; and after a while he went to prayer with us, as if he had been one half in heaven already, with ſuch aptneſs of expreſſion, ſuch ardency of affection, ſuch ſteddineſs and compoſure of mind, as

we hardly ever before obſerved. He neither uſed nor needed any book, or human aſſiſtance.

When the *Sheriff* came for him, he carried as one that had made himſelf ready, and ſeemed to be under no ſurprize nor conſternation, and went to the place of execution with an uncommon alacrity and preſence of mind. Where a vaſt number of ſpectators being preſent he ſaid, I am come hither to die a painful and ignominious death; and I would have you all that hear or look upon me this day, to take warning by me. The firſt ſtep I took towards that evil courſe of life which has brought me to this ſhameful end, was profaning the ſabbath day. That led me into bad company, which quickly brought me to haunt alehouſes. This preſently drew me on to looſe and wanton dalliances, which quickly corrupted my inclinations, ruined my morals, and broke down all the fences which my education had fortified me with; and then followed (to make me like other gallants, or rather extravagants of the time) ſwearing, damning,

ing, quarrelling even to a degree many times of outrageouſneſs. And I may ſpeak it with ſhame, moſt of my extravagant actions, even that heinous crime for which I am now to ſuffer, was committed on the ſabbath-day: And doubtleſs Sabbath-day ſins are great ſins, and great ſins bring great puniſhments. God grant mine may be only in this life; therefore I beg of you all, not to neglect or any ways profane the ſabbath day, but conſcientiouſly obſerve it, as alſo all the reſt of your precious time, which I have ſo wretchedly thrown away, and which I now ſee the value and lament the abuſe and loſs of, when I can no longer enjoy it.

And when he came to the top of the ladder he made another ſerious diſcourſe to the people, with more ardency and a greater flow of words than before, and with ſo much feeling and tenderneſs, as wonderfully affected the whole audience ſo that we think we never ſaw more wet cheeks nor melting hearts, on any occaſion whatſoever; and eſpecially in his laſt prayer,

which he delivered with ſo much judgment, affection, freedom of expreſſion, and preſence of mind, mixt with a holy awfulneſs, as conſidering to how great a majeſty, and on how weighty an occaſion he was now addreſſing himſelf, that we and many others were really aſtoniſhed. Having not we think ever met with the like, not even in the narrative of *Thomas Savage*, who we think is the moſt remarkable convert upon record; but to proceed.

His next work was to prepare himſelf for the fatal iſſue, which he did with that calmneſs and compoſure, as can hardly be imagined, even to the pulling down of his cap over his eyes, which was attended with ſuch ardent looks up to heaven, and ſuch a devout ſurrender of his precious ſoul into the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, and to the heavenly Father through him, as we think we can never forget. And when by the *Sheriff*'s order, the hangman begg'd his pardon, he put up his cap again and ſaid, I not only forgive thee, but all the world from my very heart, as I hope to be forgiven

given of God before whom I muſt inſtantly now appear; and ſee, ſaid he to the hangman, that thou henceforward lead a new life, elſe thy wicked ways will again find thee out. After which, the hangman ſomewhat faultering in turning him off, he moved himſelf nearer the ſide on which he was to be turn'd off; and as ſoon as off, he lifted his folded hands leiſurely up towards heaven, and then as leiſurely let them fall down again; and without ſo much as one ſtruggle, in a little while he expired, and was as decent and amiable a corps as death in any ſhape could poſſibly turn out. After which we took care of his decent interment, in the appointed place near the caſtle, and ſo took our leave of the whole of this affecting ſpectacle, and hope we ſhall be no looſers at laſt by our attendance thereupon. *Witneſs our hands.*

Henry Winterbottom,
Henry Butterworth,
Benjamin Heap.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

WE cannot but own we have omitted to certifie one thing, which in a ſingular manner he laid before us once again, and namely how much he lamented, that in the time of his profeſſion, before his brightneſs in religion was ſullied, he had not gone forwards in the way of duty to join in church communion, and the pious obſervance of Chriſt's holy ordinances, as he in thoſe times had both light and incouragement to do; and which he verily thought if he had had the grace and happineſs to have done, he ſhould, thro' the bleſſing of God, have been preſerved and kept faithful; and Oh! how he bewailed this neglect.

Thus much we were willing further to certify for the caution of others.

Farewell.

The first and second part of the 51st. *Psalm, Long Metre, accoraing to* Dr. Watts's *Version, being sung at the close of the foregoing Discourse, and being thought suitable to the design of it, the adding them to it, will it is hop'd, be of use to such as are affected by it.*

FIRST PART.

A Penitent pleading for Pardon.

1 SHew Pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive,
Let a repenting Rebel live;
Are not thy Mercies large and free;
May not a Sinner trust in Thee?

2 My Crimes are great, but not surpass
The Power and Glory of thy Grace;
Great God, thy Nature hath no Bound,
So let thy pardoning Love be found.

3 O wash my soul from every Sin,
And make my guilty Conscience clean;
Here on my Heart the Burden lies,
And past Offences pain mine Eyes.

4 My Lips with Shame my Sins confess
Against thy Law, against thy Grace:
Lord, should thy Judgment grow severe,
I am condemn'd, but thou art clear.

5. Should sudden Vengeance seize my Breath,
I must pronounce Thee just in Death;
And if my Soul were sent to Hell
Thy righteous Law approves it well.

6 Yet save a trembling Sinner, Lord,
Whose Hope still hovering round thy Word,
Would light on some sweet Promise there,
Some sure Support against Despair.

Second

Second Part.

Original and actual Sin confeſt.

1 LORD, I am vile, conceiv'd in Sin;
And born unholy and unclean;
Sprung from the Man whoſe guilty Fall
Corrupts the Race, and taints us All.

2 Soon as we draw our Infant Breath
The Seeds of Sin grow up for Death;
Thy Law demands a perfect Heart;
But we're defil'd in every Part.

3 [Great God, create my Heart a-new,
And form my Spirit pure and true:
O make me wiſe betimes, to ſpy
My Danger and my Remedy.]

4 Behold I fall before thy Face;
My only Refuge is thy Grace:
No outward forms can make me clean;
The Leproſy lies deep within.

5 No bleeding Bird, nor Bleeding Beaſt,
Nor Hyſſop-Branch, nor ſprinkling Prieſt,
Nor running Brook, nor Flood, nor Sea,
Can waſh the diſmal Stain away.

6 *Jeſus*, my God, thy Blood alone
Hath Power ſufficient to atone;
Thy Blood can make me white as Snow;
No *Jewiſh* Types could cleanſe me ſo.

7 While Guilt diſturbs and breaks my Peace,
Nor Fleſh nor Soul hath Reſt or Eaſe;
Lord let me hear thy pardoning Voice,
And make my broken Bones rejoice.

FINIS.

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